Polyhedron

NEWSZINE

OCTOBER

88

RPGA NETWORK

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SHATTERZONE ALIEN CONTEST

West End Games is proud to announce the *Shatterzone* alien creation contest. Create your own science fiction alien or alien creature for use in the *Shatterzone* universe and you can win:

1st Prize — $100 worth of West End Games merchandise.*

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Entries should also include a sketch of the alien or creature created. Quality of sketch will *not* be a factor in determining the winning alien, but the sketch *will* help to reinforce your description of the alien.

* Winners must choose from products available at time of publication. Multiple winning entries from one contestant *can* win multiple prizes.

All accepted entries will receive authorship credit in the finished book!

All entries must be received by March 1, 1994. Send all entries to West End Games (address listed below).

All entries must be accompanied by a signed copy of the following release form:

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Send all entries with a SASE to:

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Alien Contest

By signing this form, I agree to abide by all of the above conditions.

Name(s) of Entry: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

If Under 18, Parent Or Legal Guardian Must Also Sign: _____

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Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

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About the Cover

Wisconsin artist Terry Pavlet expertly rendered this scene on an alien world in honor of our on-going Living Galaxy column.

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If your mailing label reads "Exp 10.93" this is your last issue. **Renew today!**

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Notes From HQ

Living City Growing Pains

Living City tournaments and activities are becoming more popular.

At HQ, we think that's wonderful. We're very fond of Ravens Bluff, and we're taking steps to make the activities more numerous and fun than ever.

A Living City club formed this summer, and we've just put together a consortium, headed by Wayne Straiton, to help us with all sorts of Living City matters. We'll keep you posted.

The Network's Chunk of the Realms

Toward the end of 1986, TSR luminaries James Ward and Harold Johnson developed the Living City concept. The Network was given a city—Ravens Bluff and its environs—which Network members could develop. In 1987 articles began appearing that detailed encounters and personalities from the Living City.

These articles are designed to be used in FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting campaigns, and can be used in any fantasy game with a little work.

Living City tournaments sprang up starting at the GEN CON® Game Fair 1987. In LC tournaments, members create their own characters (using LC guidelines), and those characters gain experience points and magic items just like characters do in campaigns. Members can play their official characters in Living City tournaments throughout the world. Last issue's adventure, *Eye of the Leviathan,* was a Living City tournament. Next issue we feature another one.

At conventions in the U.S. and Canada we've operated Chemcheaux, a magic shop, where official LC characters trade magic items and gold pieces gained in tournaments for magic items they especially want.

We're exploring ways on how members can participate in Ravens Bluff activities without going to conventions. And we're open to suggestions—that's a strong hint for mail.

The Network has published four Living City products, which are out-of-print and considered collectible—*LC1 Gateway to Ravens Bluff, LC2 Inside Ravens Bluff, LC3 Nightwatch,* and *LC4 Port of Ravens Bluff.*

Living Dilemma

Network members maintain their Living City characters on an honor system. There are simply too many characters for us to keep track of them all.

We trust Living City players not to load their characters down with fabricated magic items and gold pieces. After all, tournaments are supposed to be fun, and cheating certainly takes the fun out of everything.

In fact, we know that most Living City players are honest. However, there are a few individuals who have been bending (*polymorphing* more likely) the rules. And because of that we are taking steps to make sure everything runs above-board.

Beginning with this past GEN CON® Game Fair, all Living City DMs kept track of which players and their characters received which magic items and other goodies. The consortium mentioned above is holding onto these forms, and they will help us spot problem characters.

We've also noticed a few members playing in the same Living City tournament more than once. We've stated in notes columns before that you can't play in the same tournament multiple times—Living City or otherwise. It isn't fair and you won't get credit for playing.

We haven't yet decided how to penalize players and their LC characters who have played in the same tournament more than once. Draining the PCs' experience points, removing the PC from play, and jailing the PC on some trumped-up charge in the Ravens Bluff prison, are some alternatives. What do you think? The Living City is the creation of the membership, after all, and we'd like to see some suggestions on dealing with shady characters.

Summer Conventions

Several outstanding conventions filled the summer weekends. Among the ones I was able to attend were Origins in Fort Worth, Texas, and Dragon Con in Atlanta, Georgia.

Network tournaments were so popular at Origins that we were accepting tickets for Axis & Allies games, Nuclear War sessions, and more. We didn't turn away any gamers—even though we had to run a few nine-player Living City tables.

Living City events also filled to capacity in Georgia, where gamers mingled with science fiction and comic book fans—many of whom were dressed in eye-catching costumes. Dragon Con's events were first-rate and kept a bevy of game masters and tournament organizers busy until the wee hours of each morning.

Benefit events were among the most popular. Origin's benefit event, expertly written by Ed Gibson, netted $200. Auctions for Living City items and collector cards brought that total to $850 for the Because We Care program in Fort Worth. The benefit activities were coordinated by member Aaron Goldblatt.

Dragon Con's benefit by Joey Masden and Sherrie Miller, raised $500 for the American Heart Association. Regional Director Mark Liberman coordinated Network activities in Atlanta and was so busy he barely had time to slip away for dinner.

Dragon Con ran 143 Network game sessions—a record. Among them were sessions for first-time players. At one such session I ran, I managed to kill off the entire party—and earned a "Killer DM" button from Mark Liberman. The players seemed to have a good time, despite the mounting fatalities.

I enjoyed both conventions immensely, and even found time to catch a few games. In Fort Worth I was treated to a session of *J'Adoube* for Timemaster. And in Atlanta I got to play several hands of Spud.

Volunteers played a key role at the conventions. In Fort Worth, thanks go to Rob Peacock, Lisa Menery, Sheldon Menery, Donald Bingle, Aaron Goldblatt, and Scott Douglas. In Atlanta, we tip our hat to Teeuwynn Woodruff, Kirk Reed, and Mike Capps, who pitched in to help Mark and his staff. And a congratulations goes out to Dragon Con judge Nicky Rea who scored two perfect "180s" during judging sessions.

Take Care,

Jean

Letters

The Network, Newszine, Conventions, And More

After reading your article on changes coming up for the RPGA® Network, I decided to take some time to send you my thoughts on the matter.

These are the things I consider to be important to the Network, and what I'd like to see addressed in the POLYHEDRON® Newszine.

1. Further the role playing industry.
2. Newsletter publication.
3. Plan and organize gaming conventions.
4. Tournament preparation.

To further the role playing industry, I'd like to see more coverage in the Newsletter of Call of Cthulhu, Paranoia, Traveller, Star Wars, and other game systems.

Newsletter publication is very important. It is the single largest communication the Network has with its membership. Let me say right here and now that the POLYHEDRON Newszine is THE BEST newsletter I've ever read.

Convention organization and planning is one way the Network can help foster the growth of the industry. Conventions are major undertakings, and the Network should be a team player in the planning, scheduling, and managing of conventions where RPGA Network-sanctioned events will be played. This has been true in the past, so this is not as much a criticism as a pat on the back. We can, however, streamline the process by publishing informational booklets, forming a special Convention Assistance Group, and taking other initiatives designed to cut down the time and headaches of convention planning. We've been doing it for 25 years with the GEN CON® Game Fair. It's time we put that experience and expertise down on paper and distribute it.

Tournament preparation is also important. We must have something to play at those conventions. We should concentrate efforts on developing new tournaments, even to the point of offering contests or even paying for them. Perhaps organizing a group to edit submissions and to offer advice to writers should be considered.

Now on to the Newszine. Here's what I consider priorities—membership services, such as classifieds, editorials, and Network news; industry news; game modules for all game systems; game reviews; game-related art; game-related fiction; the role of computers; and game-related movie reviews, both old and new.

Game modules should be varied. DRAGON® Magazine and DUNGEON® Adventures do an excellent job of covering the AD&D® game, so the Network should cover a wider variety of systems. A rule of thumb I'd like to propose is that no two consecutive issues of the POLYHEDRON Newszine should have a module for the same game system.

The computer column is good, but I'd like to see less emphasis on computer games and more on using the computer for managing campaigns. What would be more valuable are articles on using spreadsheets to calculate player experience points, or using a drawing program to create maps, or a word processing program to create spell books. For those of us who have been on GEnie, how about an introduction to on-line role playing? The possibilities are endless.

Roger E. Reinsmith
Farmington Hills, MI

Roger, thanks much for your input on the Network and the Newszine. You've given us some things to think about—and we'd like to know what the rest of the membership thinks of your suggestions.

We've been covering a wide variety of role playing games lately—Star Wars a few issues ago, Torg this issue. But perhaps we need to do more. Several members have written in with this request, including—John Dunn of Westlake, OH, and Richard Tomasso of Merrimak, NH. However, we didn't have space this issue to print multiple letters on this topic.

Newszine content is based on reader requests and available submissions. Let us know what you want to see.

A Discount For Members

I am the owner of Gator Games & Hobby, located in San Mateo CA. Since my opening a year ago, I have been trying to promote gaming in my area and have been giving Network members a 10% discount on games and gaming accessories that are not already on sale or discounted.

I have been a member of the Network myself for many years. I thought I would let you know that my store does support the RPGA Network and that you might want to pass on to the members that I give a discount.

Jean Seaborg, owner
Gator Games & Hobby
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Help!

As an Israeli gamer, it seems I ought to develop an inferiority complex. I am new to the Network, and I found out recently that the real benefit I have from my membership is the Newszine and its wonderful classifieds section.

Here in Israel, we have no Network clubs. Hence, we can't participate in the Decathlon or other competitions. Our LC characters won't rise to greatness, as we can't often fly to the States or Europe to join a convention.

The Israeli gamer's community is not well established. We have many of the AD&D® products, including awfully inadequate translations into Hebrew, but we don't have much else.

The hobby is young here. The main point of this is that I would like some useful information on how to build a Network club. And, once this goal is achieved, how can this club compete in international competitions.

On the last day of the 1992 GEN CON® Game Fair, my friend, Yoav Abrahami, and myself went to the Network's HQ. The evening before we were part of the winning team at "Spelljammer Tactical Battles," and we were hot on the idea of running this event in Israel. Jean promptly gave us gaming materials and prizes. So far, we haven't had much success running the event (the Israeli convention, TEDDY, is a small affair). The box given us by Jean remains sealed. But we hope to open it soon. We think the first competition of an Israeli Network club will make a fine occasion.

As an aside, if any judges read this, please contact me; we want to run the event soon.

Anyone reading this is welcome to send advice; we'll answer any letter.

Yossi Gurvitz
11b Haazmaut St.
Petah-Tivka, Israel, 49379

Yossi, I wish you luck on forming a club. All you need are six Network members. If you cannot find the members in your own country, consider joining an existing club. Many of our Network clubs have members from all over. In fact, I suspect (hint, hint) that some of these clubs might contact you and ask you to join. Keep us posted on your progress with starting a club. Network club activities are great, and you don't have to attend conventions to participate.

Don't Limit Tournaments

Please do not restrict a convention by telling it how many tournaments, first-run or not that it can have. My free time is scarce, and when I go to a convention, it must be worth my time. I attend nine or more conventions a year, most of which I would not go to if they were forced to run events that were run at several other conventions.

If a convention is three days long, I would expect to play in at least eight events. If I cannot, then the eight-hour drive, or multiple-hour flight, is not worth the time or expense.

Many conventions using first-run tournaments are usually supported by Network clubs. These clubs not only write most of the tournaments to be run at the convention, but they supply many of the judges as well.

As far as the quality of the events, just because a convention runs 15 or 20 new tournaments does not mean that they will be mediocre. In fact, most of them are quite good because of the combined efforts of the writer, the convention staff, and in some cases the regional director.

I go to Ohio (AndCon and King Con), Connecticut (ConnCon), and other far-away places to play, be with friends, and enjoy myself. These are good conventions that I would highly recommend to anyone. They offer enough of a variety of events, that I can always find enough new events to play. Do not take this away from them or me.

Kevin Rau
Milwaukee, WI

Kevin, we only have been limiting conventions when they provide tournaments so late that we cannot read them in time or when they make a request for tournaments too late for us to handle. It is our policy to mail tournaments to organizers four to six weeks in advance of their convention; this is so they can duplicate the material and get it to their judges. We need the tournaments far in advance of the mailing because of the number of conventions we handle. For example, we cannot abandon work on Convention A's material to deal with Convention B's very late tournament submissions. It isn't fair. So, Convention B isn't likely to have all the tournaments approved that it hopes for.

Further, we sometimes notify conventions if we believe they are asking for too many events. A one-day convention that asks for 12 tournaments is not planning well. At best, that one-day event will have four slots available for gaming.

Living Galaxy

Roger Moore: I enjoyed your *Living Galaxy* column in issue #84. I actually enjoy them all, but I enjoyed this one more. You may be on to something in the way that you shift the type of column. There had been a string of "how to" columns, and now you changed tracks to give a "resource guide" column on running games based on alternate histories. You can still go a long way if you cover and compile novels based on post-holocaust futures, classic space-opera, whatever—but mix that with other kinds of articles. Keep us guessing.

There's one particularly detailed and amazing alternate history you missed; Canadian author S.M. Stirling wrote a trilogy of books called *Marching Through Georgia* (1988, Baen Books), *Under The Yoke* (1989), and *The Stone Dogs* (1990). This series suggests that the defeated British Loyalists in America did not flee to Canada, but to South Africa. Later, defeated Confederates joined them, and the Crown Colony of Drakia (later Draka) eventually overruns Africa and becomes a relentless world power. The nuclear war in the third book (there may be a fourth by now) was particularly tense and stunning, and the Drakan super-power has retained its commitment to slavery for any non-Drakan.

And there's even a role-playing game on an alternate history which you could have mentioned—unless it's no longer produced. This is called *Reichstar*, which suggests the Axis powers won WWII. It is now 200 years later and FTL space travel exists. Germany and Japan explore strange new worlds, discover new civilizations—and brutally crush them. It was published by Creative Encounters of Charlotte NC.

Pierre Savoie
Toronto, ON

Pierre, we tried to track down Creative Encounters. The company is no longer in Charlotte, perhaps no longer exists, and the phone number you had for them has been disconnected.

Still, gamers looking to get a copy of Reichstar should consider used game auctions, hobby shops specializing in out-of-print games, and the Newszine's classified ads.

Death Pits of Natatiri

by John Terra

The action begins in a Nile Dominant Zone, where the player characters are being held in a prison.

Nile Axioms: Magic 12, Social 20, Spiritual 17, Tech 21.

It is up to the PCs to escape and recover their equipment. How the PCs landed in prison is up to the Game Master—imprisoned on false charges, taken out by drugged food, done-in by sleep gas, captured on a failed mission to investigate Natatiri rumors, etc.

Players' Introduction

What a week you've been having! Each of you had been assigned by your superiors to look into the mysterious goings on at the Death Pits of Natatiri. The alleged pits are located 10 miles west of Khartoum.

You found out that the pits are all too real. Through a series of unlucky breaks, you managed to get captured, stripped of your weapons, and thrown into this dank cell.

You know you're 10 miles west of Khartoum, in an underground prison. Natatiri herself is rumored to visit this place, though it is not her main haunt.

You are in a 30′ by 30′ stone room with an iron door. The door has no slits, viewports, or any other means of looking out. There is a key-operated lock, but not the type with a peek-through keyhole. There are no furnishings, not even straw to sit on. There is an unpleasant odor in the air.

You hear footsteps outside your door, no doubt guards. For such an accomplished group of Storm Knights, escaping a guarded cell should be easy.

Breaking Free

The Storm Knight PCs are in a stone cell with a locked iron door. A group of six gospog of the second planting stand guard outside.

The cell door is iron and has a Toughness of 20. The lock has a difficulty of 12. An Evidence Analysis roll of 10 reveals that the odor the PCs smell is decomposed flesh, as if something is lying dead outside. The PCs should be able to break out of the room or trick

the guards into opening the cell door. (They can kick down the door, use the old "I'm sick" routine, or anything else that amuses the GM).

Once free, the PCs come face to face with the gospog, complete with Egyptian headdresses and armed with rifles.

Gospog of the Second Planting (6): DEX 10, STR 10, TOU 14, PER 10, MIN 9, CHA 7, SPI 9.

Skills: fire combat 12, heavy weapons 11, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 11, find 11, willpower 11, intimidation 15.

Equipment: M1 rifle, Damage Value 20, ammo 8; bayonet, (+3/13).

Two gospog have flashlights.

Event: After defeating the gospog, the floor gives way, dropping the Knights into a pitch black pit.

As soon as the last gospog falls to the ground, your sense of relief is so great you feel like you are walking on air. In fact, you are. The floor has opened up, dropping you into a dark shaft. As you plummet, you see a trapdoor, now above your head, reset and close with a loud and final click.

Your fall into the inky blackness is cushioned by what seems to be a large pile of cloth and sticks. The smell of ancient dust, the slight scent of almonds, and the lingering stench of death hang in the air. You feel hemmed in by dirty rags.

Before you can gather your wits, a burst of static fills the air, and a voice—female and seductive despite the broadcast distortion—greets you.

"Welcome, Storm Knights. I am your hostess, Natatiri, the Overgovernor of the Khartoum Region and loyal follower of the Great Pharaoh and High Lord Mobius. I am so glad you could—drop in. You might be wondering where you are. Let us say you have the privilege of being in my personal playroom. Today, the game is life or death, and you are in no position to refuse to participate.

"If you survive my Death Pits, you are free to go, to leave this realm unharmed. Rest assured that no matter how tough things look, there is always a way out. One more thing. Next time, when you fall, try to be quieter. You made enough noise to wake the dead. Enjoy this first chamber. You'll find that the more time you spend here, the more you'll realize what a gas it is. Ta-ta, sweet heroes!"

The voice ends with a crackle of static, and everything around you starts to move.

Flags: If a Nemesis card is played, Natatiri is an acknowledged enemy of the Knight. A Suspicion or Mistaken Identity card played by any Knight means that the GM should quietly collect the card, then pass a note to a random player, citing the card-playing PC as a possible traitor.

It's the Pits

The Situation: The Storm Knights are in a dark pit, surrounded by animated dead bodies. Poison gas is being pumped in through a pipe near the trap door in the ceiling. The exit is hidden.

The Action: The dead bodies, the remains of Natatiri's slaves, animate and attack the player characters. Due to the close quarters, all attacks from the PCs are made at −2 to the Acting Value.

The gas is cyanide, hence the almond smell. The pit is 30′ deep, and the gas cloud travels 10′ per combat round. It attacks each PC with a Damage Value of 15 during each round a the PC breathes it. Holding one's breath is an ineffective tactic.

There is a set of hieroglyphs on the north wall. This is the magical formula which animates the bodies. If the hieroglyphs are erased, the bodies fall lifeless to the ground. Of course, the glyphs cannot be found unless the PCs have a light source.

The secret exit is a camouflaged panel in the east wall. When a PC searches for an exit, he must announce which wall he is searching, and which third of that wall—the left, center or right panel. A successful Find roll against a difficulty of 12 (18 if there is no light) reveals the exit. A PC can search one panel a round.

The panel opens into a passageway one yard high by one yard wide.

Dead Bodies (24): DEX 7, STR 9, TOU 9, PER 9, MIN 4, CHA 3, SPI 4.

Skills: unarmed combat 10, trick 8, test 8, taunt 12, intimidation 9.

Equipment: claws (+3/12).

Flags: An Alertness card reveals the passageway. An Idea card reveals the connection between the hieroglyphs and the dead bodies.

Variables: Knights who attempt to climb the walls hoping to go back through the trap door find their efforts in vain. The trap door has a TOU of 35.

Something Sphinx in Here

The Situation: Crawling through the passage, the Knights fall down a chute, past rotating knives, and into a chamber with a sphinx statue.

The Action: Once the party crawls 40′ into the tunnel, they discover the passage collapses into a greased, sloping dark chute 160′ long. Sliding PCs move at a rate of 40′ per round. At the 80′ mark is a set of rotating blades that have a Damage Value of 15. A Dodge result of 12 enables a PC to avoid the blades.

If the Knights have a light source, they notice the walls of the chute are streaked with dark red-brown stains, and they also see the knives below them. The Dodge in this case must be made against a difficulty of 8.

The chute ends in a 40′ by 40′ stone room lit by four torches, one on each wall. The torches can be removed and will burn for one hour. In the center of the room is a stone sphinx, 20′ long and 8′ high.

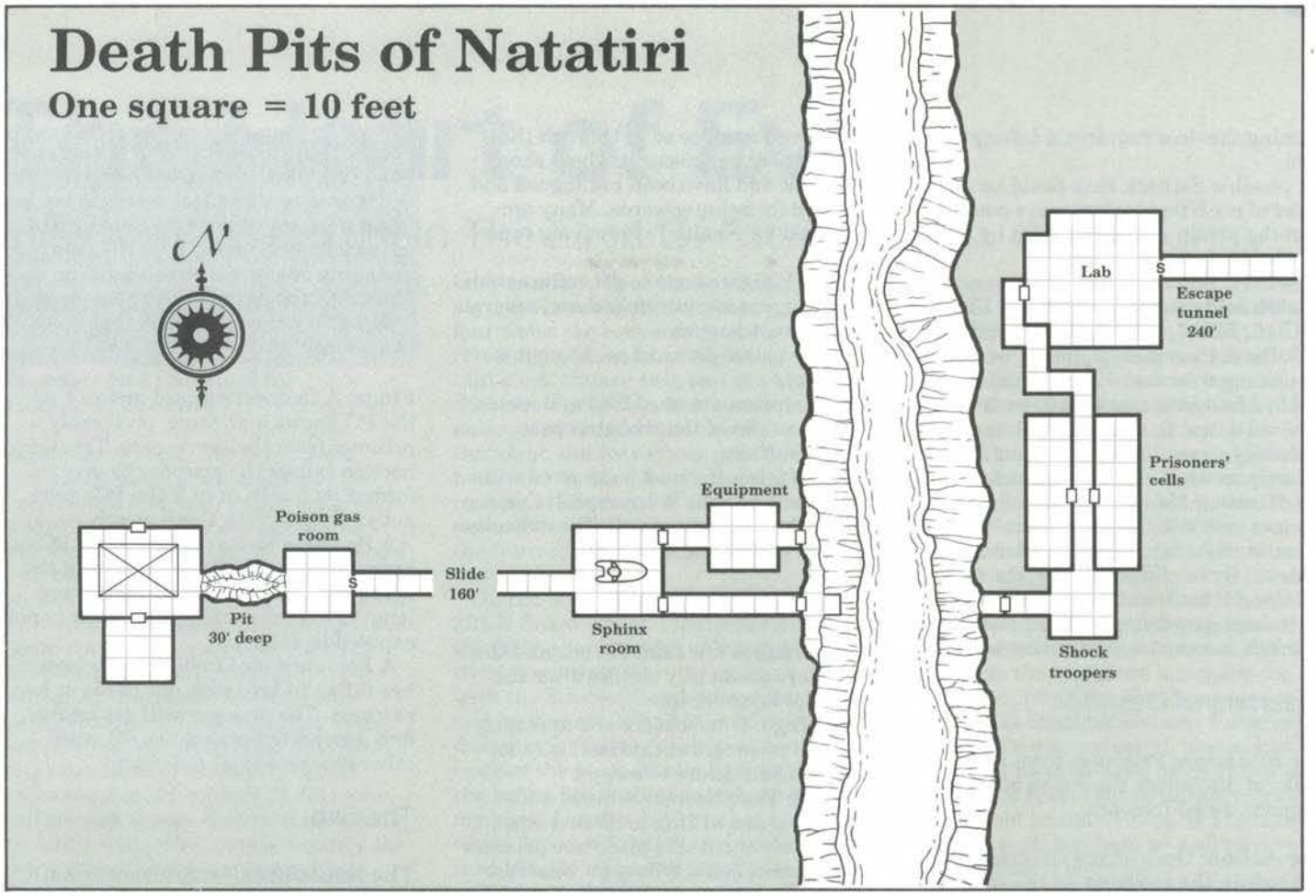
The statue's mouth opens, and the stone beast speaks. "Welcome, strangers, to the chamber of the sphinx. I will pose a riddle. The answer you give determines your future course. If you choose not to answer, you will suffer dire consequences. Any answer, even a wrong one, is better than silence. The riddle is: One plus one equals one, as the passage of nine moons clearly shows. First pain, then joy. As new falls from old.

The answer is childbirth.

A correct answer causes the northern half of the eastern wall to fall away, revealing a brass door. An incorrect answer causes the southern half of the eastern wall to fall away, revealing a bronze door.

The brass door leads to a chamber with all of the Knights' equipment. A door from that room leads to the next encounter.

The bronze door opens into a corridor decorated with the hieroglyphs of Storm



Knights dying by horrible torture. Their bodies are being thrown to a pool of alligators. The paintings are so gruesome they have an Intimidation value of 15.

Flags: An Idea card gives the PCs the correct answer, but no credit for good role playing should be allowed.

Variables: If the PCs do not give an answer, the sphinx attacks them.

Stone Sphinx: DEX 12, STR 18, TOU 20, PER 14, MIN 12, CHA 11, SPI 12.

Skills: dodge 15, maneuver 14, unarmed combat 14, find 16, language 17, trick 20, test of will 15, willpower 15, persuasion 12, taunt 18, intimidation 17, reality 14.

Equipment: fire breath Damage Value 18, paw crushing attack.

Possibilities: 6

Cliffhangers

The Situation: The Knights enter a chamber with no east wall. Instead, there is a sheer 60′ drop into an underground river. A second ledge stands 80′ across from the Knights. The ceiling is dark and hides flying critters. The water is filled with piranha.

> Leaving the chamber of the sphinx, you find yourselves in a room with no eastern wall. Rather, you have a panoramic view of an underground chasm 80′ across. The ceiling stretches upward at least 60′ and trails off into darkness. Sixty feet below, an underground stream flows. Opposite you, on the other side of the chasm, is another ledge. The floor of your chamber is made up of six large blocks of stone.
>
> As you study your surroundings, you are startled by a loud boom. A slab of granite has fallen, blocking the door you just used.

The Action: The party must get across the chasm. Allow each PC one round of free actions. After this, an electrical crackle fills the air and one of the six blocks that makes up the floor disappears. Another one disappears each round. Only two Knights can stand on a block. Make sure to first dissolve the blocks that do not have PCs on them.

The west wall of the chamber has a solid iron handle (meant for a rope). The granite slab that blocks the door is immovable. The ceiling is 120′ high and is covered with stalactites. Hidden among them are giant, carnivorous bats. The stream below is 20′ deep and is filled with piranha.

The chamber on the other side has an iron ring for a rope.

Giant Bats (10): DEX 12, STR 10, TOU 11, PER 9, MIN 4, CHA 3, SPI 6.

Skills: dodge 14, flight 12, stealth 16, unarmed combat 14, find 12.

Equipment: Fangs (+4/14).

After the first person crosses the chasm, the bats swoop down and attack anyone else who tries to cross.

Piranha (lots): Every Knight who falls into the stream suffers a Damage Value 12 each round until he leaves the water. Use the victim's base Toughness, ignore armor. Attempting to climb out of the water is a difficult (12) task. Only one Climbing attempt may be made by a PC per round.

Flags: An Alertness card played here reveals the outline of the door the PCs did not take. This could be a way for the group to backtrack and get their items.

Opening the door requires a Lifting roll of 20.

A possible Setback here could be a squad of six Nile shocktroopers coming from the prison pens—attracted by all the commotion.

Nile Shocktroopers (6): DEX 9, STR 9, TOU 10, PER 7, MIN 7, CHA 7, SPI 9.

Skills: fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, unarmed combat 12, climbing 10, find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9, survival 9, test 9, willpower 12, taunt 9, faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12.

Equipment: KK81 semi-automatic rifle, Damage Value 19, Ammo 24; bayonet (+3/12); two grenades, damage value 14; field kit, including: water canteen, three clips of ammo, one day's rations, 30' cord, and a mini-survival kit (talcum powder, adhesive bandages, matches, a compass, and a wire saw).

Prisoners of Despair

The Situation: Prisoners from all walks of life, under the guard of shocktroopers, await freedom.

The Action: Once across the crevasse and safe in the chamber on the other side, the Knights find an iron door (TOU 22). It is locked (difficulty 12). Once they get it open, they face six Nile shocktroopers.

Nile Shocktroopers (6): DEX 9, STR 9, TOU 10, PER 7, MIN 7, CHA 7, SPI 9.

Skills: fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, unarmed combat 12, climbing 10, find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9, survival 9, test 9, willpower 12, taunt 9, faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12.

Equipment: KK81 semi-automatic rifle, Damage Value 19, Ammo 24; bayonet (+3/12); two grenades, damage value 14; field kit, including: water canteen, three clips of ammo, one day's rations, 30' cord, and a mini-survival kit (talcum powder, adhesive bandages, matches, a compass, and a wire saw).

After the PCs defeat the shocktroopers, read the following:

> The stench of unwashed bodies overwhelms you. Lining both sides of the chamber are two huge cells. Each is filled with prisoners and slaves. They are weak, gaunt, and beaten.

The chamber contains slaves, ex-laborers, and other-cosm prisoners. Many were given a choice to go through the death pits or be prisoners. These chose the latter and have been harangued and tortured for being cowards. Many are also used for Natatiri's horrifying experiments.

If the Knights hope to get information from the prisoners or help them, several things must happen.

1. The prisoners must see the gates opened.

2. The prisoners need food and water. The mess kits of the shocktroopers should suffice.

3. The prisoners must be inspired with a dramatic speech. To accomplish this, a PC needs to make a speech. The difficulty number is 15 using Charm.

Results of the Speech

Minimal: A few faint cheers, and the prisoners obediently shuffle after the PCs like loyal sheep.

Average: Some cheers and applause, and the prisoners enthusiastically announce their desire to escape.

Good: The prisoners whistle and cheer and are willing to discuss what they know about this place (see prisoner information below). They do whatever the PCs ask, provided the danger is slight.

Superior: The prisoners do all of the above, plus are willing to fight for their freedom.

Spectacular: The prisoners do all of the above, plus are whipped into a fighting frenzy. They believe nothing can stop them now. The prisoners swear loyalty to the PCs and will do anything they ask—no matter the risk. In addition, the PCs are so inspired they each gain 3 Possibilities.

Prisoners (24): 8 ex-laborers, 4 slaves, 2 Aylish dwarves, 1 Aylish centaur, 3 edienos, 1 Rauru Block agent from Nippon, 1 stalenger, 2 Core Earth soldiers from Egypt, a Gaean gypsy, and a Victorian regimental soldier.

The prisoners have no equipment and are weak. Their value in a fight will be unremarkable.

Prisoner Information

> "We are not exactly sure what that she-devil is doing! We were led into this great chamber, a machine of some sort hummed with great power, and a part of the machine was aimed at us. It made a great deal of racket and light, but we feel unchanged.
>
> "The only side-effect seems to be that many of us get very clumsy and disoriented, tripping over the floor, banging our heads on columns, or having light bulbs drop on our heads. We know where the lab is that holds this machine."

Flags: A Connection card means that the PC knows a prisoner, preferably a prisoner from the same cosm. This Connection causes the prisoner to give information freely, even if the PCs were not victorious with their speech.

A Personal Stake card means a PC knows the family of one or more of the prisoners, and that PC will go to any lengths to make sure the prisoner is not exposed to danger.

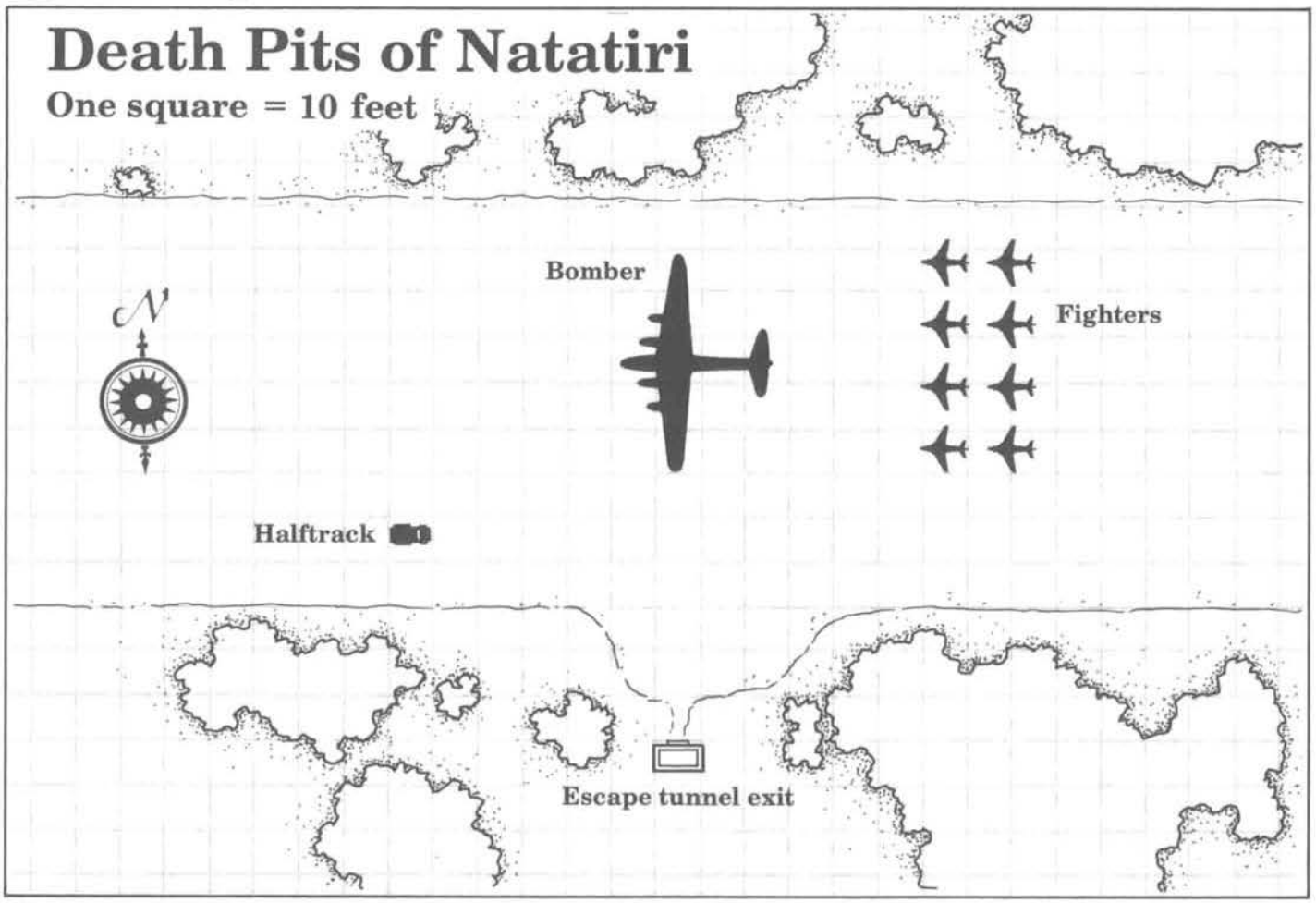
A Romance card indicates a prisoner has fallen in love with one of his or her rescuers. The prisoner will get underfoot, slavishly worship the PC, and otherwise be a total nuisance.

The Lab

The Situation: Overgovernor Natatiri, a pulp villainess known as the Scarlet Asp, and a half-dozen shocktroopers, are busy at the Misfortuntron. Due to the nature of the machinery, this room is Nile PURE ZONE. No Misfortuntron-created Setbacks occur here.

The Action: The door to the room is reinforced steel (TOU 24) and locked (Difficulty 18). Once the party gets through the door, read the following.

> You burst into the room and an odd feeling washes over you. The place has become even more "Nile" to you.
>
> The chamber is dominated by a massive machine that has scores of wires, tubes, lights, and other objects protruding from it. Part of the machine has several glass boxes attached; they contain a broken mirror, a black cat, a pile of salt, a piece of paper with the number 13 scrawled on it, and a ladder.
>
> Standing at the console at the far side of the room is none other than the beautiful Natatiri herself. Next to her is another woman of great beauty, who bears a resemblance to Natatiri. This woman is dressed in a revealing scarlet outfit. A half-dozen



shocktroopers, in the midst of maintaining the machinery, grab their weapons and whirl to face you.

Natatiri addresses you.

"So, my brave Storm Knights, you have defied my Death Pits. And I see that you have even freed the prisoners—temporarily. Unfortunately, your exploits have already started to bore me, so I fear it is time to bring these proceedings to an end. You see, with my new machine, the Misfortuntron, I have been able to siphon the latent bad luck in these objects, and I shall use the machine to bring a massive amount of bad luck to the forces fighting against our armies!

But first, all of you must experience a different form of bad luck! Get them, lackeys!"

In the opening of the battle, Natatiri presses a button on the console, which opens a door behind her, allowing her to make a getaway. The button also opens a recess, which holds a Walking God Set. At the same time, Scarlet Asp covers Natatiri's escape for two rounds, then attempts to depart down the same passage.

Scarlet Asp: DEX 12, STR 10, TOU 10, PER 13, MIN 8, CHA 14, SPI 12.

Skills: acrobatics 13, dodge 16, melee weapons 14, running 13, stealth 15, unarmed combat 15, climbing 12, find 14, first aid 15, hieroglyphics 14, land vehicles 15, scholar (Terran mystery men and villains) 14, scholar (master criminal) 16, trick 16, test of will 14, weird science 16, willpower 19, charm 19, persuasion 18, taunt 18, intimidation 14, reality 16.

Equipment: gizmos—asp headband: TOU 12, dispersal 20, electro-ray 20; asp staff: TOU 15, force field 20, flight 15, mind control 17; poison ring, damage value 12; skimpy costume.

Possibilities: 18

Set Walking God: DEX 14, STR 16, TOU 17, PER 12, MIN 12, CHA 8, SPI 9.

Skills: dodge 17, unarmed combat 17, melee weapons 17, find 14, trick 13, test 14, taunt 8, intimidation 13.

Equipment: tail, Damage Value 23; shriek, intimidation 17; barbed spear, Damage Value 23 plus automatic K result.

Inclination: Evil

Possibilities: 6

Nile Shocktroopers (6): DEX 9, STR 9, TOU 10, PER 7, MIN 7, CHA 7, SPI 9.

Skills: fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, unarmed combat 12, climbing 10, find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9, survival 9, test 9, willpower 12, taunt 9, faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12.

Equipment: KK81 semi-automatic rifle, Damage Value 19, Ammo 24; bayonet (+3/12); two grenades, Damage Value 14; field kit, including: water canteen, three clips of ammo, one day's rations, 30′ cord, and a mini-survival kit (talcum powder, adhesive bandages, matches, a compass, and a wire saw).

Event: The Misfortuntron has a TOU of 15. If "killed," it explodes in a flashy display of pyrotechnics, though it causes no damage. All of the Storm Knights are caught in a Possibility Wave that immediately gives each PC an extra 3 Possibilities. This reflects the released luck energy from the machine.

Variables: If the prisoners are here and willing to fight (depending on the outcome of the Storm Knights' speech), add 10 gospog of the first planting, and say that the prisoners will spend the entire battle fighting them. The prisoners will win.

Flight or Fight

The Situation: Having escaped the lab, the Storm Knights follow the open door used by Natatiri to escape.

The Action: The escape door leads to a tunnel 240′ long, which slopes upward. It ends above ground at an airfield. An idling NB11 Nekata Heavy Bomber sits 120′ away from the tunnel exit. Sixty feet to its right and 160′ diagonally to the right of the exit, sit eight PM-1 Paket fighters, ready to scramble.

In addition, a Xfz 311-Aaka halftrack is roaring toward the exit, starting 100′ away, diagonally to the left. The halftrack has a driver, a gunner, and eight shocktroopers.

The bomber has been specially modified so that it can actually hold 30 people. It carries a payload of bombs.

NB11—Nekata Heavy Bomber
Speed: 400 kph/250 mph/15 value
TOU: 24
Pass: 7 (But 30 for this one)
Armament: 20 HE bombs, DV: 35
Four .55 Onslaught MGs, DV 25
Ammo 24

PM-1 Paket Fighter
Speed: 600 kph/380 mph/16 value
TOU: 17
Pass: 1
Two .30 Kaifu MGs, DV: 25
Ammo: 22

Xfz 311 Aaka Halftrack
Speed: 60 kph/40 mph/11 value
TOU: 25
Pass: 12 (8 are present)
One .30 Kocha MG, DV: 22
Ammo: 15

The halftrack offers partial concealment, −3 to Action Value for anyone firing at a target inside the halftrack.

Nile Shocktroopers (8): DEX 9, STR 9, TOU 10, PER 7, MIN 7, CHA 7, SPI 9.

Skills: fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, unarmed combat 12, climbing 10, find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9, survival 9, test 9, willpower 12, taunt 9, faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12.

Equipment: KK81 semi-automatic rifle, damage value 19, Ammo 24; bayonet (+3/12); two grenades, damage value 14; field kit, including: water canteen, three clips of ammo, one day's rations, 30′ cord, and a mini-survival kit (talcum powder, adhesive bandages, matches, a compass, and a wire saw).

Variables: PCs with the presence of mind to destroy the Pakets on the ground will make things a lot easier for their group. The planes are due to give pursuit if the bomber takes off.

Good-Bye, Death Pits!

The Situation: Once the plane gets in the air, other problems surface. There are mummies on board (they were due to be shipped somewhere), and Paket fighters to drive off.

The Action: Once in the plane, the PC flying the NB11, must total an 8 with Air Vehicles to get airborne.

If the Pakets were not destroyed, eight planes attack the PCs three minutes after they takeoff in the NB11. If the Pakets were destroyed, only three planes attack the NB11 10 minutes after takeoff.

The onslaught machine guns on board the NB11 were partially disassembled for preventative maintenance. This will not be immediately apparent unless someone states they are checking the guns and generates a Heavy Weapons total of 6. Reassembling the guns requires a Dramatic Skill use.

A: Generate a Find against a difficulty of 8 to find the missing pieces scattered throughout the plane.

B: Generate a Heavy Weapons against a difficulty of 10 to reassemble the guns.

C: Generate a Heavy Weapons against a difficulty of 8 to properly load the ammo belts into the guns.

Three minutes after takeoff, the six mummy cases on board open, and the mummies attack everything in sight. The plane had been undergoing a ritual to keep the mummies quiet until needed, but the ritual was interrupted once the Storm Knights hijacked the plane. The prisoners, if present, are useless in this battle. The sight of the mummies terrifies them.

Mummies (6): DEX 6, STR 15, TOU 20 (8 against fire), PER 3, MIN 5, CHA 3, SPI 15.

Skills: unarmed combat 11, trick 13, test 13, taunt 13, intimidate 13.

Variables: A Setback on board the plane during the fight against the mummies means that a stray bullet has hit the controls, disabling the bomber. An Air Vehicles result of 10 is needed to restore control to the plane. The Knights have four chances before the plane impacts.

The Knights can also use the bomber and its bomb payload to ruin the Death Pits complex. This requires a Heavy Weapons roll of 12. Two bombs must hit the complex to destroy it.

Aftermath

If the Knights manage to defeat the mummies and drive off the Pakets, they win. A voice comes through the static on the radio.

> The sultry voice that haunted you in the Death Pits crackles over the plane's radio.
>
> "So, Storm Knights, you have escaped! True to my word, you have free passage out of the Empire! All airspace has been discretely cleared, and you may fly safely to Kenya. This round goes to you, but you haven't seen the last of me, my dear Storm Knights. No, not at all. I'll get you yet. Till we meet again!"

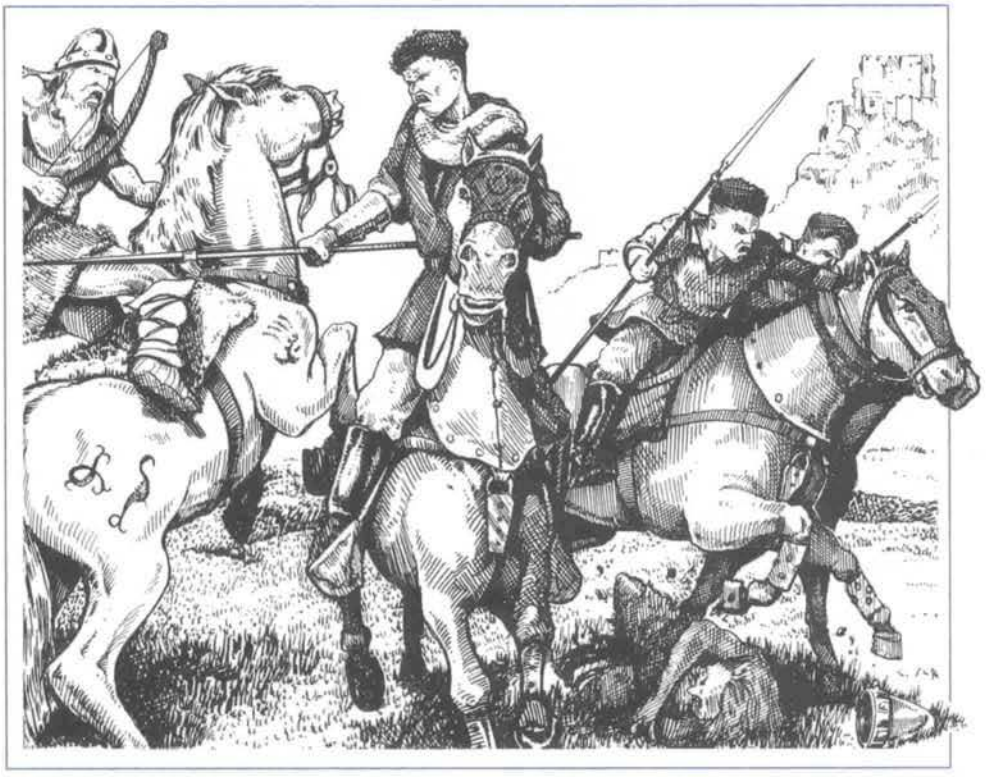
Awards: Each Knight gains 6 Possibilities. Give each Knight an extra 3 if they bombed the complex, and another 3 if the slaves were freed and safely led out of the realm. Award an extra 2 Possibilities if they managed to capture or kill the Scarlet Asp. ❑

The Everwinking Eye

Treasures Of The Vast, Part One

by Ed Greenwood

"Treasure? Aye, lots of it in the Vast, lad; why didn't ye ask earlier? Oh...I see; ye wanted to live a while, first."
Buirin Thalshond, merchant of Tantras, *Year of the Prince*



Our ongoing tour of the Realms has brought us to the Vast, where we'll take a quick tour of the treasures of the Vast. This is a by-no-means exhaustive survey of where the loot is (or may be). For reasons of time and space, the cities—Calaunt, Ravens Bluff, Tantras, Procampur and Tsurlagol—are excluded; interested DMs are advised to consult the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* hardcover sourcebook for hints about all of these places except our own Ravens Bluff. The Flooded Forest, Maskyr's Eye and Sevenecho are also missing, as is the hoard of the dragon Tlanchass, because they were extensively covered in previous columns. Later columns will complete our survey of the riches of the Vast.

Adhe Wood

This wood is old and very thickly grown; the giant trunks of trees stand close together, rising like dark lances eighty feet or more. Duskwood and shadowtop are the predominant varieties, with some felsul and oak on the southern edges.

The heart of Adhe Wood is a place of perpetual gloom—home to many spiders and ettercaps.

The sage Alither of Lyrabar believes the source of the various spiders is an unusual deepspawn. This monster is detailed in FR11/Dwarves Deep, and in the revised *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting* boxed set.

Another sage, Othla Multar of Spandeliyon, believes that drow are behind the arachnids, which they breed and release here to guard an entrance to the Underdark. It is true that drow emerge from the woods occasionally and steal southeast into the Tsurlar Forest, where they trade with pirate ships in hidden coves. No adventurers have investigated the true cause of the wild variety of spiders—or if they have they have not returned to tell about it.

Arachnids encountered deep in the woods may be of any size, and most have strange spell-like powers and body weaponry (such as hooked slasher-claws or sting-tails).

Local lore in Tsurlagol whispers that the bloodless, web-shrouded husks of many fallen adventurers litter the forest, and that the ruins of an old temple they were trying to reach can be glimpsed from The North Road. The temple is adorned with statues of rearing snakes and festooned with webs. The snakes' eyes are gigantic emeralds, barely visible through the shrouds of spider silk. No one knows for sure which god this temple is dedicated to, and both locals and sages have spent a lot of time debating the point. Everyone seems sure, however, that the temple houses a fabulous collection of gems.

Strangely, the inhabitants of the nearby hamlet of Sevenecho have never heard about the temple, but they never go near "spider-haunted Adhe Wood" either.

Bambryn

This village is located where the trail called the Long Reach crosses the large, well-traveled road known as the Hlintar Ride. Its pastoral beauty and easy access to trade routes make it popular with successful and not-entirely-retired merchants and adventurers looking to build manor houses.

There is a lot of wealth in Bambryn. Most of the wealth is invested in fine horseflesh and luxury crops, such as flowers kept fresh with cantrips for shipping. Bambryn also produces truffles and other exotic mushrooms. Treasure that can be seized without a fight is less plentiful—but there are tales of a highwayman's lost loot.

Iljack of the Black Blade was a daring brigand who swung a dull black broad sword with magical powers. He terrorized the central Vast in the early days of human habitation, stripping peddlers and dwarven traders of their goods. On many occasions Iljack narrowly escaped

death, using the magic of his blade to spirit himself out of traps and bloody ambushes. He returned the favor by hunting down and slaying anyone who led a strike against him.

In the end, this thirst for revenge claimed his life: he hunted down a merchant who had wed a sorceress. When Iljack broke into the tower the couple shared in Procampur, the sorceress hurled him out a window. The highwayman was engulfed in a swarm of fireballs and only ashes and a blazing blade struck the water below. Iljack's booty, widely believed to be hidden somewhere in Bambryn, and his base of operations, has never been found.

Not long ago, a stone marked with a black sword was found buried under a tree when a storm uprooted it. There was no treasure under the stone—only another stone bearing the black sword symbol and these words: "Moved it all. See me for your share."

From time to time, adventurers come to Bambryn looking for the highwayman's treasure. Those who go poking around manor house grounds are usually welcomed in an unfriendly fashion by war dogs—or worse.

Beluar's Hunt

This area of rolling hills is the site of the elven warrior Beluar's great victory against the orcs. Today, it is a grassy wasteland where the occasional brigand lurks, and wild horses roam.

Popular Vast folklore says that some of these hills hide barrow tombs of great antiquity—and some shallow and hasty warriors' graves from the early days of human rule in the Vast.

Such tales are given support by the disaster that befell a Dragon Cult force some 20 winters ago. They found stones that appeared to be broken pieces of pillars, and they dug into the hillside around them. The excavation opened up a tomb that was home to a lich. The creature's skeletal head had antlers like a great stag, and its magic slaughtered them in a very short and terrible time.

The stag-headed lich then strode around the nearby countryside, butchering every living creature it met, before retreating into its lair and using spells to bury itself again.

Two mages, one in Tavilar and another in Kurth, who were independently scrying the area witnessed these events, so the tale rings true.

Presumably, the lich still lurks somewhere under the grassy hills.

Veteran travelers report that the Dragon Cult force found and carried off more than one tomb treasure before unleashing the lich. Many adventurers speak longingly of searching the hills one day, but then someone speaks of the stag-headed lich—and silence falls.

Blanaer

This waystop village is the local market for scores of sheep and cattle farms. It is full of grassy paddocks for keeping stock, manure piles, and other exciting attractions. "Stinks like anything within sight of Blanaer" is a popular Vast expression. Lost or perilous treasure is not something most folk associate with this hard-working farming center. There are, however, tales of riches hastily buried under manure piles and in the heart of the busy stockyards.

These treasures, so the tales go, were buried by thieves on the run from treacherous comrades or vengeful victims, or by metal traders from Kurth on the run from brigands. If the tales are true, the everpresent hooves, horns, and bulk of the cattle guard these treasure caches well.

It is true that bodies have been found hanging from roadside trees in Blanaer on more than one morning in the past decade (sometimes fleeing thieves get caught). It is also true that in earlier, more lawless days brigands fought openly up and down the Cross Road in the vicinity of Blanaer.

Coffers, rotting saddlebags, and even water pails and nosebags full of coins have turned up in Blanaer's pastures and manure piles from time to time, but only the gods know if there is more booty to be found here.

Brynwood

This large forest rambles up and down many rocky outcrops and steep-sided ravines, covering a large area north of Maerstar and Sevenecho. The trackless, tumbled terrain is as difficult to travel through as the Stonelands north of Cormyr, and is home to many monsters.

Human incursions have cleared much of the land between the mountains and the Tsurlagan coast, but no human has dared try to fell the deadly Brynwood.

Many korreds and satyrs once dwelled in Brynwood, but the two races disputed territory with each other. In the strife that followed, both fell prey to more fearsome monsters that grew steadily more numerous, and the korreds and satyrs have almost disappeared.

Legends say that a clan of evil shape-changing creatures dwell here. These are reputed to be spell-using beings who can appear as female humans to lure male adventurers into the forest depths, and then change into wolves, owlbears, or huge snakes and devour the hapless men. A minstrel even composed a ballad about one of them, a white-haired, scornful mage he called "Snowhair the Sorceress."

At least three notable adventuring bands: The Company of the Talking Shield, The Men of the Purple Sash, and The Skullsword Reavers, have vanished while exploring Brynwood in the past decade. Harper rangers have been heard to mutter that "something evil lurks in that wood." One tavern tale popular in Impiltur tells of an ancient, many-spired castle at the heart of the wood, where the shapeshifting women dwell, devising powerful spells, and using magical gates to travel to Westgate, Telflamm, Airspur, and even to Waterdeep with a single step.

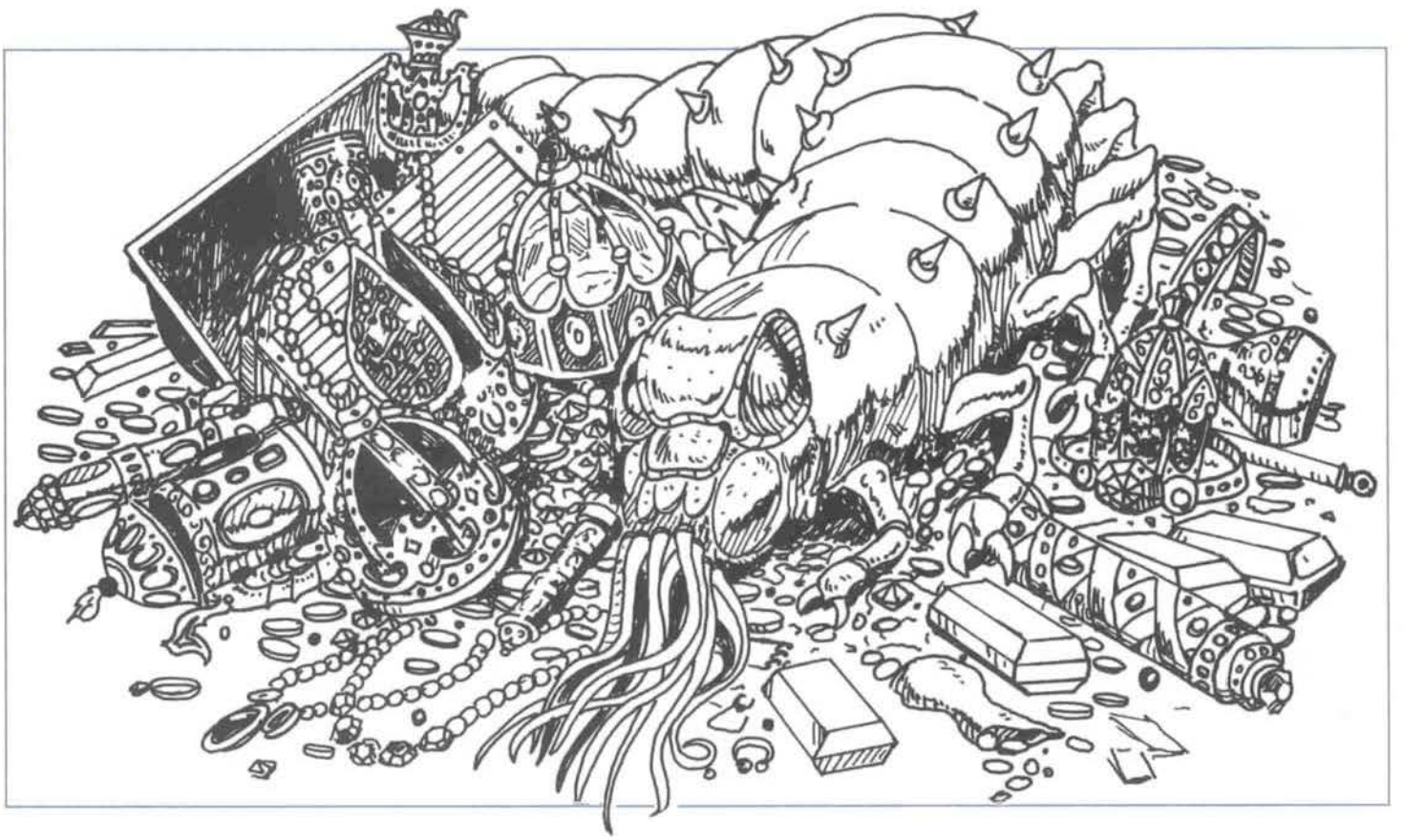
At the castle, the tale whispers, the women gather magic by stealth and poison, slaying or drugging wizards and seizing what they can. One day these "Bryndar," as the tale dubs them, will emerge to try and rule the Realms by their magic.

Dark Hollow

This small village gets its name from the tree-cloaked valley where Feldar's Trail (from Fallentree to Mossbridges) crosses the Hlintar Ride. Dark Hollow has always had a dangerous "fey" reputation across the Vast. Folk see it as a place where faerie dragons frolic, brownies and other woodland beings play pranks on intruders, and many crazy would-be wizards dwell in little ramshackle cabins in the woods.

The place's reputation is not inaccurate. Most of the wizards spend their days trying to devise spells. These wizardly experiments often go awry and bring disaster to anyone nearby.

In such a place, monetary treasure is paltry; wizards never have enough coin for the very expensive business of working magic, and are often reduced to selling potions to put bread (and a little cheese) on the table. Some merchants from Ravens Bluff and Hlintar do a



brisk business by selling the "hedge wizards" here spell components and fragments of artifacts or broken magic items. They also buy potions. Adventurers often find this a lucrative trade—but a dangerous one. Thieves are always alert for such valuable loot.

The hedge wizards of Dark Hollow range in level from 1st through 16th (most are 4th to 8th), and all alignments are represented. Their magical treasure—spellbooks and scrolls, collections of rare components, and working magic items—is considerable. It also is often hidden in extremely ingenious ways, and heavily trapped and guarded. More than one wizard has wands cleverly built into his desk, so he can fire at intruders standing in front of it without getting up or moving his hands.

More than one thieving band has found Dark Hollow to be a convenient place for stashing loot; they usually choose a wizard's woodpile, or compost heap. There's just one problem—recovering the loot. That kitten playing on the woodpile may very well be a familiar that diligently guards its master's property. Such a creature is bound to consider the coins to belong to its master, once they've been put in the woodpile, and probably would report the donation to the wizard moments after the thief has left.

Dead Tree Hollow

This onetime camping place on The North Road is a small valley, well supplied with ponds. For years, a huge, gnarled old oak with a trunk as large around as many cottages marked the place. Only the rotting stump remains now.

A druid made his home in the hollow tree years ago, but a hungry dragon burned him out of it.

Today, Dead Tree Hollow is a sleepy little woodland village known for its fiddlehead (in season) and fern-frond (the rest of the year) soup, exotic mushrooms (much prized by gourmets around the Dragon Reach) and its excellent wagonworks.

The Hollow also has its own tale of treasure. An elven carriage is said to be buried somewhere in the Hollow (perhaps sunk in one of the ponds). The carriage is supposed to be a magical, flying conveyance from long ago, still packed with the gem-adorned silk gowns and jewelry of the Lady Alauthshaee, a haughty elven woman who died in it. Her bones—and those of her guards—may well lie with the fallen craft.

They were slain by Ilthuryn, a furious elven mage, and a scorned suitor, whose spells smashed them from the sky and then buried them alive. This happened a very long time ago, but elves in the area remember the incident because Lady Alauthshaee was extremely wealthy; she had outlived six husbands and taken all their wealth for her own.

Adventurers still occasionally search for Lady Aluthshaee's final resting place—but be warned—the entire Hollow is a dead-magic zone, where no spells work. This is said to be the price of Ilthuryn's reckless spells.

As promised, our "treasure tour" of the Vast continues in later columns. ❑

The Living City

The Ravens Bluff Diviner's Guild

by Walter Roberts

The Diviner's Guild is located in Ravens Bluff's Uptown section. It is in a one-story building built of a combination of stone, lead, and Gorgon's blood. This is to make the building resistant to magical scrying and other-planar entry.

The guildhall contains a library, a laboratory, several private study chambers, storage rooms, an audience chamber, servant rooms, and opulent quarters for the three guildmasters.

The interior is lit by *continual light* globes, and the outer door and windows are *wizard locked.* The ceilings are uniformly 10 feet high, except for a guest room with a 15-foot-tall ceiling.

To enter the guildhall, one has simply to knock and tell the servant who answers the nature of one's business. The servant will then consult with the guildmasters, and if they wish to do business with the visitor, the servant welcomes the individual inside.

The guild's main purpose is to supply a place where mages can come to study and hone their art, and where budding diviners can find wizards to apprentice with.

The guild also offers the services of its members to those with an ample supply of gold, and it sells potions and spells to people in need of magical aid. Finally, the guild supplies magical help to the city in times of trouble.

Guild Membership

Membership in the Diviner's Guild is open only to diviners who are able to meet the initial 5,000 gold piece fellowship dues. In addition, all members pay 10 percent of their annual earnings to the guild, or 500 gp, whichever fee is less.

The fellowship dues and subsequent annual fees entitle all guild members to the following benefits:

- Use of the guild's library, which contains hundreds of books about history, politics, warfare, and magic.
- Free training to gain additional levels of experience.
- A 20 percent discount on potions and scrolls for sale.
- Use of the guild's laboratory, which is continually stocked with spell components and odd ingredients.
- Spell components at cost.
- Aid in finding employment in the city or with adventuring bands.

The guild sells potions, powders, and scrolls to the general public and guild members. The following items are for sale; guildmembers receive a discount.

Item	Cost in Gold
Potion, *ESP*	800
Potion, *Clairaudiance*	375
Potion, *Clairvoyance*	450
Scroll, *Know Alignment*	1,500
Scroll, *Detect Magic*	1,200
Scroll, *Detect Undead*	1,600
Scroll, *Identify*	1,400
Scroll, *Detect Evil*	1,800
Scroll, *Detect Invisibility*	1,600
Scroll, *Locate Object*	2,000
Scroll, *Detect Scrying*	1,750
Scroll, *Magic Mirror*	1,900
Scroll, *Contact Other Plane*	2,700
Scroll, *False Vision*	2,800
Scroll, *Legend Lore*	2,900
Scroll, *True Seeing*	2,750
Scroll, *Undetectable Alignment*	1,300
Scroll, *Hurnung's Guess**	1,400
Scroll, *Past Life**	1,650
Scroll, *Wizard Sight**	2,400
Scroll, *Locate Creature**	2,350
Scroll, *Khazid's Procurement**	2,450
*Powder of the Black Veil**	4,700
*Powder of Magic Detection**	4,650

* From the *Tome of Magic*

The guild will buy researched divination spells at a cost of 1,000 gp per level of the spell. It also will purchase magic items useable by wizards at 10 percent below the GP Sale Value listed in *The Magic Encyclopedia.*

Guild Administration

The Guild is run by diviners elected every five years by the membership. The current guild masters are: Saldo Presto, Rial Potjian, and Aberdeen Krestner. The trio's term is just beginning.

Saldo Presto

16th Level Male Human Diviner

STR: 9
INT: 17
WIS: 17
DEX: 17
CON: 16
CHA: 12
AC Normal: −3
AC Rear: 0
Hit Points: 52
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Languages: Common, Elvish
Age: 35
Height: 6'7
Weight: 181
Hair/Eyes: black/gray

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, sling, staff
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Artistic ability (17), etiquette (12), heraldry (17), spellcraft (15)

Spells/day: 5 5 5 5 5 3 2 1, plus one additional divination spell at each spell level.
Spells normally carried: *Cantrip, detect magic, detect undead, identify, read magic, color spray, detect evil, detect invisibility, ESP, know alignment, locate object, darkness 15' radius, clairaudience, clairvoyance, blink, delude, fly, infravision, detect scrying, magic mirror, dimension door, extension I, fire shield, polymorph self, contact other plane, false vision, airy water, animal growth, avoidance, distance distortion, legend lore, true seeing, glassee, flesh to stone, vision, phase door, reverse gravity, screen, polymorph any object.*

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 0, potion of healing, ring of free action, ring of mind shielding,* and a *staff of power.*

Saldo Presto is a scholarly aristocrat who always dresses the part. Wearing the finest of robes and cloaks, he keeps his hair trimmed just above his shoulders and stylish, and trims his salt-and-pepper beard short.

Although equal in position with the other divination guildmasters, he is the most magically powerful of the three wizards. Presto's guild duties place him

The Gaming Is Hot!

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WINTER FANTASY™ 1994

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Return form to: WINTER FANTASY, RPGA Network, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

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Network Pre-registration Form

	Friday				Saturday				Sunday	
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	
AD&D® RAVENLOFT® Feature, two-round event *Curse of the Casket by Stephen Turner*	J P		J P		J P	J P		F	F	F= final round
AD&D Special, two-round event *Guardians of North Keep by Mark Hoskins*		J P		J P	J P		J P		F	
AD&D Grand Masters (for 5th level players and above) *Who'd Want To Kill Us? by Brad Warriner*	J P					J P				
AD&D Benefit *The Trouble With Sara by R. Derek Pattison*			J P	J P		J P		J P	J P	
AD&D Living City Feature & Masters *Scavenger Hunt by Rembert Parker*		J P			J P			J P	J P	
AD&D Team Tournament (for Network Clubs, too) *Runefire by G. Watkins, E. Wilson, S. Theis, and W. Baas*			J P				J P			
AMAZING ENGINE™ Bughunters Feature & Masters *Unnatural Selection by Lester Smith*		J P		J P			J P		J P	
Timemaster *Fugue by Cyndi and Brett Bakke*	J P				J P			J P		
Paranoia Feature & Masters *BRT Sector by James Cheney*			J P			J P		J P		

Other events will be available on-site!

Friday
Slot 1: 8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
Slot 2: Noon to 3:45 p.m.
Slot 3: 4 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.
Slot 4: 8 p.m. to 11:45 p.m.

Saturday
Slot 5: 8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
Slot 6: Noon to 3:45 p.m.
Slot 7: 4 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.
Slot 8: 8 p.m. to 11:45 p.m.

Sunday
Breakfast– 8:30 a.m.
Slot 9: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Awards Ceremony –3 p.m.

Pre-register for up to four events if you mail this form with your payment by November 30.
Make your selections by circling the time slot for the events you want.
Event sign up is first-come, first-served.

Circle the "J" if you wish to judge an event.
Circle the "P" if you want to play an event.

Breakfast buffet: Cost $15. Tickets available through pre-registration only.

Name_____ Network Membership #_____
Address_____
City_____ State _____ Zip Code_____
Day Phone: (_____)_____ Evening Phone: (_____)_____

Fees: Mark the appropriate fees and enclose a check or Money Order, payable to the RPGA® Network.
____**Pre-registration:** $15 (less $5 if you judge Network events)
____**Benefit tournament:** $5.00
____**Sunday Breakfast Buffet:** $15.00
Total Costs I have enclosed:_____
IMPORTANT I will arrive at the convention (time and day): _____
Return entire form to: WINTER FANTASY, RPGA Network, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

The **WINTER FANTASY™** convention is sponsored by the ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network. All tournaments and events will be held in the Hyatt Regency in Milwaukee. There are restaurants in the Hyatt, in the nearby Hotel Wisconsin, and within a few blocks of convention activities.

Come in from the cold! Come to WINTER FANTASY!

* Take part in officially sanctioned Network tournaments!
* Find a seat in the seminars featuring our Guests of Honor!
* Climb in a mech and join the action in our annual BattleTech Bash!
* Find bargains in our Dealers Room!
* Mingle with game designers and editors!
* Discover the fun of gaming in RAVENS BLUFF™ The Living City!
* Guide a country to victory in our Axis & Allies Challenge!
* Take flight in our non-stop DAWN PATROL® Games!

* * * Guests of Honor * * *

Bill Slavicsek

Designer and editor for many of TSR's DARK SUN® accessories, Bill is a veteran in the gaming field, and is now part of the TSR, Inc. staff, Bill has worked on everything from military simulations to fantasy board games to role playing products. He had a hand in creating the *Paranoia* and *Ghostbusters* game lines and co-designed *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*. Bill is noted for his excellent work on *Star Wars ,The Roleplaying Game*. Among his credits for West End Games are the best-selling *Heir to the Empire* and *Dark Force Rising* game supplements, based on the Timothy Zahn Star Wars trilogy. He is also the author of the upcoming *The Updated Guide to the Star Wars Galaxy* for Ballantine Books. Bill's recent works with TSR include *The Complete Book of Humanoids* for the AD&D® game, and *Slave Tribes, Arcane Shadows,* and *Elves of Athas* for the DARK SUN line.

James Lowder

Best-selling author, game designer, and columnist–Jim's talents and credits are many. His most recent novel is *Prince of Lies* for the FORGOTTEN REALMS® book line. His other novels include: *Crusade, Knight of the Black Rose*, and *Ring of Winter*. He edited the *Realms of Valor* FORGOTTEN REALMS anthology and will edit the upcoming *Realms of Infamy* anthology. Among Jim's game credits are: *Jungles of Chult* and *Hall of Heroes*. He also had a hand in editing the SPELLJAMMER® boxed set. In his spare time, which is becoming increasingly rare because of his book projects, Jim pens *Into The Dark*, a video review column for the POLYHEDRON® Newszine. Jim is currently working on *The Screaming Tower,* book one of the RAVENLOFT™ Ebonacht Trilogy. The book, scheduled for release in late 1994, is set in a new domain and introduces the cursed hero, Marius the Undying. Jim has various other writing projects in the works, including a comic book series.

Bruce Nesmith

Chief designer for the RAVENLOFT® line, Bruce is firmly entrenched in fantasy horror. His many RAVENLOFT game credits include: *House of Strahd, The Created, From the Shadows,* and the popular *Forbidden Lore* boxed set. Bruce is heralded for his design work on the DRAGON STRIKE™ game and on the AD&D® accessory–*BATTLESYSTEM™ Skirmishes.* Bruce's works are numerous and line the shelves of hobby shops. Among them are: The GAMMA WORLD® 4th Edition game, *Mutant Masters, Mutating Mutants,* various MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™ supplements, *Saber River, Day of the Octopus, Lone Wolves, Beta Principle, Hall of Heroes,* and *Book of Lairs*. One of his most recent works is *The Warrior's Tale*, a young adult book based on the DRAGON STRIKE game. Bruce is also noted for his RPGA Network tournaments set in the Demi-Plane of Dread and for his articles in DRAGON® Magazine and the POLYHEDRON® Newszine.

* * * Seminars * * *

Handling High-Level Heroes: How can you challenge an 18th-level wizard? What problems can you throw at a fighter with followers? Game designers Bill Slavicsek and Bruce Nesmith offer suggestions for keeping high-level characters–and their players–interested in your campaign. ***10 a.m. Friday.***

Into The Dark: Help Jim Lowder decide which are the five best–and five worst– fantasy/science fiction/ horror films for gamers. Results of this seminar will become an installment of *Into The Dark*, Jim's long-running monthly video review column in the POLYHEDRON® Newszine. ***Noon Friday.***

Questions, Anyone?: Bruce Nesmith and Bill Slavicsek moderate this question-and-answer session focusing on the many TSR game worlds and publications. Having trouble mastering psionics? Curious about Ravenloft's Dark Powers? Want to know what's coming up on the world of Athas? How can I play humanoid characters? This is the place to be. ***2 p.m. Friday.***

Board Games at the Game Fair: Join Jon Pickens, who moderates the GEN CON® Game Fair's board gaming section to discuss which games are popular, which ones should be avoided, and which ones should be featured at the next Game Fair. ***8 a.m. Saturday.***

Beyond The Death Star: Star Wars galaxy expert Bill Slavicsek explores ways to run campaigns set against the backdrop of the new Star Wars novel trilogy. Bill also discusses the Star Wars genre and will field questions about this science fiction phenomenon. ***10 a.m. Saturday.***

Add a Dash of Horror: Bruce Nesmith discusses how to inject elements of fear and terror into your role playing campaign. Get tips from the master of the RAVENLOFT® setting. ***Noon Saturday.***

Gaming to Fiction: Does your campaign contain a wealth of potential story ideas and characters? Join author and editor Jim Lowder for a discussion of the rewards–and dangers–of turning your role-playing sessions into fiction. ***2 p.m. Saturday.***

Writing For Publication: Join Bruce Nesmith, Bill Slavicsek, and Jim Lowder for a discussion about breaking into publishing. Get tips from the pros on how to submit game material and fiction to TSR, Inc. and other publishers. ***10 a.m. Sunday.***

Living City Update: What's in store for RAVENS BLUFF™ The Living City? Living City club representatives and Network staff members take a look at tournaments and other activities. Bring your questions about the Living City and L.C. events! ***2 p.m. Sunday*** (right before the Awards Ceremony).

Attention Official RPGA® Network Clubs!

Get ready to compete for trophies and honors in the Network Club Event, *Runefire*. Use this form to sign up for the event.

Club Name:_____

President's Name:_____

President's Address:_____

_____

_____

President's Day Phone: ( )_____ Evening Phone: ( )_____

Circle Slot Preference:

Slot 3 **Slot 7**

as the one to deal with Ravens Bluff government officials.

Presto comes from a prestigious family of Cormyrian mages. At the age of 17 he began his adventuring career, which led him throughout the Inner Sea lands.

During these years he met Aberdeen Krestner and the Calishite Rial Potjian. They traveled together for nearly a decade before settling in the Living City and taking up residence near the Diviner Guildhall.

City life sat well with them, and they devoted their time to tomes rather than travels. However, their daring exploits did not stop. Only last year the three overheard a plot in a nearby tavern and successfully stopped a move by the Red Wizards of Thay to infiltrate the Ravens Bluff council. After this, the three were elected guildmasters of the Diviner's Guild by unanimous vote and earned the respect of the Lord Mayor.

Presto is, perhaps, the most ambitious of the three. He secretly has his sights on succeeding Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane. Failing that, he plans to move from Ravens Bluff and establish a political career elsewhere.

Aberdeen Krestner

12th Level Male Gnome Diviner

STR: 10
INT: 16
WIS: 13
DEX: 17
CON: 13
CHA: 10
AC Normal: −1
AC Rear: 2
Hit Points: 34
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Gnomish, Dwarvish, Halfling, Goblin, Elvish
Age: 86
Height: 3'1"
Weight: 57
Hair/Eyes: Sandy blond/ice blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, dart, sling
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Gem cutting (15), engineering (13), spellcraft (14)

Spells/day: 4 4 4 4 4 1, plus one additional divination spell at each level.
Spells normally carried: *Detect magic, read magic, audible glamer, change self, Nystul's magical aura, detect evil, ESP, blindness, blur, deafness, clairaudience, clairvoyance, illusionary script, spectral force, wraithform, detect scrying, magic mirror, fear, minor creation, rainbow pattern, vacancy, contact other plane, false vision, advanced illusion, dream, shadow magic, true seeing, legend lore.*
Magic items: *Wand of illusion, deck of many things, cloak of protection +4, ring of protection +4,* and a *ring of invisibility.*

Aberdeen wears a different robe each day. He has many different robes, in many different styles, but all of them are white. Most of them are long and flowing, with gold trim.

The gnome also wears a constant sneer on his face, as if he knows a vital secret that he is not willing to divulge. His eyes burn with a strange glee.

His duty as a guildmaster is to handle all the financial transactions of the guild. A genius with numbers, he keeps perfect records and has found numerous ways for the guild to save money.

Aberdeen comes from the famous family of gnome jewelers, the Krestners, who reside in Eshpurta. His parents expected him to follow in the family tradition and to learn to make exquisite works of jewelry. Aberdeen tried; however, he quickly became bored with the trade, and when he overheard an adventuring company from Calimshan planning an expedition, he decided to join them.

The company later encountered some drow in the ruined city of Monrativi Teshy Mir, and during the climatic battle a wild magic surge caused Aberdeen and a fellow mage, Rial Potjian, to be teleported to Myth Drannor. After they fought their way out of the infested city, they soon joined with Saldo Presto. The three have been inseparable since.

Aberdeen is mischievous and fun loving. Except for working with finances, his actions are unpredictable.

Rial Potjian

10th Level Male Human Diviner

STR: 11
INT: 17
WIS: 10
DEX: 17
CON: 16
CHA: 14
AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 40
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Languages: Common, Elvish, Halfling
Age: 30
Height: 6'2"
Weight: 185
Hair/Eyes: Brown/bright green

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, dart, staff
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Astrology (17), engineering (14), etiquette (14)

Spells/day: 4 4 3 2 2
Spells normally carried: *Detect magic, identify, alarm, protection from evil, chill touch, detect evil, know alignment, spectral hand, protection from cantrips, locate object, clairvoyance, feign death, hold undead, vampiric touch, magic mirror, contagion, enervation, false vision, summon shadow, avoidance.*
Magic items: *Robe of the archmagi, ring of protection +2,* several *potions of longevity,* and a *ring of regeneration.*

Rial's skin is tan and weathered from his many years spent in Calimshan. He continues to spend at least four hours each day outdoors, traveling about the city streets and the docks, and working on inventions.

His duty as a guildmaster is to oversee the upkeep of the building, library, laboratory, and to deal with the daily running of the Guild.

Rial comes from a family of minor nobles in Calimport. While still in his youth he became disillusioned with the decadence of his family and the ruling class in general. This prompted him to take up magic and adventuring.

His travels took him to Amn, where the gnome diviner Aberdeen Krestner joined his adventuring company. Wild magic transported them to the ruins of Myth Drannor, and they—and Presto—eventually found their way to the Living City.

Rial is a devoted and caring man. He has seen what the ruling class is capable of, and he intends to give the common man more power by becoming a just ruler. He hopes to one day succeed the Lord Mayor of Ravens Bluff, a dream he shares with no one. He has *potions of longevity* and years of wisdom on his side.

Rial is fascinated with gadgets, and is constantly working on one new invention or another. Often, he tinkers on these devices in the courtyard of the guildhouse, so he can keep an eye on the building and the visiting diviners.

The Living Galaxy

Not Quite 101 Uses For A Dead Module

by Roger E. Moore

When GDW's *Traveller* came out in the late 1970s, I immediately got it and set up a campaign. Then, I ran into a huge problem: There were no adventures! I fixed up a campaign setting and some scenarios, but I really missed having "official" material to guide me.

Wouldn't you know, however, that I had all the space adventures I could possibly use right at my desk side—and all they needed was some patient work to bring them into glory. The adventures I overlooked were modules for TSR's AD&D® game. Cave complexes, primitive towns, island fortresses, and more beckoned, but I never saw them as any other than what the module labels said they were.

Worse yet, when *Traveller* modules finally came out, I used them only once, then put them away and again complained about the lack of available adventures.

When other science fiction games appeared, I'd ignore their accessories and wait for those for my game. If I had a time machine now, I'd go back to 1978 and smack my 1978 self in the forehead. "Idiot," I'd hiss, then jam this article into my 1978 hands and return to 1993, older and wiser in the ways of gaming.

As you might guess, this month's slightly ghoulish topic is one that concerns game masters with limited budgets and adventure-hungry groups (in other words, all of us) how to get the most bang from your buck when you buy an adventure module for your science fiction role playing campaign.

Once you've run a module, thus "killing" it for further use with the same gaming group, what can you do with it?

We'll start off with a fervent hope that no GM ever throws out a "dead" module. You could, of course, sell or give your used module to a GM who hasn't run it yet. You could auction it off at a game convention (more on this later). You could let it gather dust on the shelf.

But, a really good module in the hands of a competent GM might never die at all, greatly extending the lifespan and vitality of the campaign.

We'll address this issue using old STAR FRONTIERS® modules from TSR. The game system was orphaned when TSR dropped it some years ago, and the modules are now out of print—but at least I won't be spoiling anyone's campaign by dissecting a brand-new module for a current game system. We'll also rely heavily on information from past columns at various points.

Rerun—With A Twist

People move a lot these days, and gaming groups almost always undergo considerable shifts in membership. In my army days I belonged to a gaming group that changed membership completely three times in three years, with the only consistent member being me. (I eventually left, too.) Our group primarily played the AD&D game, though we took side trips into other game systems as well.

Because of the constant shifts in membership, it became possible for me to run one of my AD&D modules twice, and I was on the verge of running it a third time when I left the group (the adventure was the venerable *Steading of the Hill Giant Chief*). I discovered that my familiarity with the module took away a bit of its sense of wonder when I reran it—but only for me. The new group members loved it, and I ran the module much more efficiently the second time around because of my extensive notes and memories from the first campaign.

My familiarity with that module also let me be more free with the way the adventure played out. The group members thought up some remarkably bizarre ways of attacking the hill giants, and I handled it all with ease. I suspect that when players sense the GM is comfortable with running a module, they are inclined to adopt riskier and more dramatic plans. It made for a fun evening.

That familiarity also let me fiddle with the module's layout—its characters, setting, treasures, and so forth. I had a better idea of what the area looked like, how the giants could defend their fort, which magical items I wanted (or didn't want) the player characters to get, and the probable outcomes of certain actions on the part of the PCs. If I'd wanted, I also could have restructured the module's plot and set-up to produce a vastly different result, perhaps running an "adventure prelude" or even altering the missions of the PCs.

When glancing over a used module, look for places where the adventure could be expanded—side treks or extra sections that add to the overall quest. Think of possible ways you could restructure the plot or character goals (you don't have to use everything you think up, but give yourself lots of room for play). Examine the treasures, weapons, vehicles, creatures, and NPCs, considering whether to add or delete from the lists. Think up ways to link the module to other adventures.

Example: Doug Niles's nicely done STAR FRONTIERS module SF4 *Mission to Alcazzar* begins with the PCs' investigation of a mining colony's disappearance, at the behest of the colony's owner, a corporation named CDC. It would not be difficult to restructure the module so the PCs come to Alcazzar as members of the initial mining settlement, which came under heavy attack by a rival corporation's armed forces and was wiped out.

Some of the PCs in the first group might survive to join forces with new arrivals, waging guerilla war against the invading Streel mercenaries. In this way, the second-time use of the module adds a prologue to the "main" adventure, actually doubling its game-play life. The entire adventure would conclude, one hopes, with the defeat of the Streel forces and the probable (if regrettable, from CDC's point of view) opening up of Alcazzar to mining by other firms and the planet's eventual colonization.

The layout of the CDC compound in the original module was quite sparse; more detail could be added to it, with terrain maps showing the landscape for several kilometers around the compound. The Streel compound and the terrain around it could also use more work, with lots of notes on the "treasures" therein: tools, weapons, credits, vehicles, information, etc. (The "Living Galaxy" column in POLYHEDRON® Newszine issues #66 and 67 would be of help here.)

The GM, if he is a bit of an artist, could sketch out a bird's-eye or ground-

level view of the two compounds in perspective, making the setting even more real to the players. Pictures from magazines or other sources would pop up descriptions of the landscapes of Alcazzar for explorers, as noted in this column in issue #82. Battles could be played out with miniature figures, and clever players might even lead the successful evacuation or defense of the CDC compound if they have adequate warning of the Streel attack—which the GM could arrange. (This isn't likely, however, even with excellent PC tactics, as Streel mercenaries are heavily armed.)

Encounters with local wildlife, natural disasters, personal rivalries, and other events would keep the initial characters occupied before the Streel attack. Notes from this column in issue #86 could be used to fill out the general ecology and wildlife. Little is said, for instance, on the aquatic life of Alcazzar. And the barbaric lokkuku culture could be expanded using information and supplemental materials given in issues #80 and 81. The "alienization" notes from this column in issue #58 would help add sensory details on the environment, again for the sake of game realism, and the column on nonlethal adventures in issue #64 would fill the initial PCs' time over 1-2 gaming sessions before Streel arrives and its deadly attack begins. A fire-locust swarm or rampaging gwerrah (creatures detailed in the module) could keep the PCs busy for quite a while!

As long as I'm fooling with the plot, I can fool with the PCs and NPCs. One or two members of the first and second PC expeditions could be set up as corporate spies, government agents, undercover law-enforcement officers, etc. Perhaps they're investigating charges against CDC, are studying Alcazzar for colonization by another firm, or are spying on certain NPCs with shady backgrounds.

Given the backdrop in the STAR FRONTIERS® game universe of the Sathar Wars, an NPC also could be introduced who is a Sathar agent bent on espionage and sabotage—a wild card unconnected with the undeclared CDC-Streel war. The previous articles in this column on generating PCs and NPCs (particularly in Newszine issues #57, 63, 70, and 87) could be employed to flesh out the major CDC and Streel employees involved.

Finally, the GM's readings on pure science might influence the course of the adventure or add spark to the setting. Alcazzar has seven natural satellites: What are they like? How do they look from the planet's surface? Are their movements or phases useful for keeping time? What other effects would the slow rotation of Alcazzar have on its climate and ecology? What could be said about Alcazzar's geology or paleontology that would be useful for PCs? What would Alcazzar's frigid "nightside" be like?

Convert—Or Die!

A variation on the previous "rerun" idea is the conversion of your used module into another game system, for play with a new group or possibly even the original group, if sufficient time has passed for everyone to have forgotten some of the details. This also works well if your module is "dead" because you never got to use it for the game system for which it was intended.

Maybe everyone in your group stopped playing game X and now plays only game Y, leaving you with a bunch of potentially useless game X modules. And why can't you get adventures for other game systems and convert them to your own? Some game auctions at

conventions will sell batches of modules for orphaned games at very low prices; loads of *Space Opera, Universe*, STAR FRONTIERS®, *Space: 1889, Star Ace, Aftermath*, and other adventures could be yours for a song.

Converting materials from one game system to another has been covered a number of times in different places, particularly in the POLYHEDRON Newszine. Generally, I don't recommend converting character statistics directly into a new system. Just make up the appropriate statistics as you go along, perhaps using stock NPC statistics.

Obviously, some modules will convert to your campaign better than others: A GAMMA WORLD® adventure with lots of mutants might go better with the alien-rich, Force-using *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*, by West End Games, than into the hard-science universe of the *2300 AD* game. POLYHEDRON Newszine issues #75 and #81 listed many products for specific role playing games that could be converted into other systems without great difficulty.

Don't turn up your nose at modules out of the science fiction genre, either. Remember the "Star Trek" TV episode, "A Piece of the Action"? There you had a world that imitated the American 1920s era, down to the costumes and blazing machine guns. Wouldn't a module for a 1920s game come in handy the next time Captain Kirk visits the world in *Star Trek: The RPG*? Jean Rabe has used TSR's GANGBUSTERS™ and BOOT HILL® modules in her *Star Wars* campaign, with the appropriate conversions.

In short, when considering a module for conversion, look at the setting, NPCs, races, equipment, skills, and other parts, and decide how easily the material can be transferred to your campaign. Obviously, game statistics must be changed; look for modules with few such statistics but lots of plot.

Example: The STAR FRONTIERS adventure SFAD5 *Bugs in the System*, produced by Graeme Morris, is a devious and superb disaster rescue mission that turns into a multiple murder mystery with overtones of *The Terminator*. The module converts fairly well to other systems, providing a high-tension ride that players will never forget.

The environment itself, an unusual mining operation in and around a gas giant (Venturi), can be adopted as is. The maps of the balloon "extraction platform" Jetsom, the 20-kilometer-long processing station Moneyspider, the frozen moon Snobol, and possibly even the computer-system diagrams and program overviews will convert as they are. The plot needs no adjusting; minor details such as the name of the corporation sponsoring the Venturi Project can be changed if desired, though both the *MegaTraveller* and *Star Wars* universes are large enough to support extra corporations.

Most of the changes will come in converting the game statistics and possibly even the identities of the races and equipment (including tools, weapons, and armor).

The standard STAR FRONTIERS game races of humans, Dralasites, Vrusk, and Yazirians are present, as well as a new semi-intelligent race (sapes) and a variety of robots and cybots (lifelike robots). The nonhuman races would be minor races in the *MegaTraveller* universe, though you could also make them into Vargr, Aslan, alternate human races, or other minor races that already exist in that game. In the *Star Wars* game, racial conversions may be made to Wookiees, Ithorians, Mon Calamari, Quarren, and others. Sapes may be taken just as they are, with new statistics. Weapons, tools, robots, and armor may be substituted as desired. Check the conversion of any computer-related skills, as such are critical to the adventure's success.

Further ties can be developed linking this module to new game systems. One of the crew aboard the *Star Wars* version of the Moneyspider might be an Imperial spy collecting evidence on the Rebel-supported mines at Venturi; a force of Stormtroopers and TIE fighters might visit at the adventure's end to capture or kill the PCs and the Moneyspider's crew. In the war madness of the *MegaTraveller* universe, Vargr pirates might wish to take the mining operation from a megacorporation's grasp, looting it and using it as a refueling base. A gigantic war fleet en route to a battle (or fleeing an unsuccessful one) might drop in to refuel at Venturi; the PCs might have not only to rescue the survivors of the implacable killer in the project, but also to escape from the system before they are annihilated.

Above all these other considerations, the presence of the Matrix (the "bugs" of the module's title) and its disastrous effects on all electronic circuitry and computers it inhabits can plague the PCs throughout the adventure. Play this to the hilt, causing trouble for allies and enemies alike.

Contest! See if you can spot two errors, one on the front cover and one on the back cover of this module. Three lucky readers who write to me and name these two errors—one of which is quite amusing—will be chosen at random to win a free year's worth of DRAGON® Magazine. The contest deadline is December 1, 1993. TSR employees cannot apply—sorry. Good luck!

Stay Tuned For More!

So you're not going to run your module for another group (at least, not yet), and you're not converting it to another game system. Why not simply develop full-sized spin-off adventures from the completed one? Few things are more effective in establishing a consistent universe than having logical consequences of the PCs' actions follow them around. The plot of the movie *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* was a logical development from the much earlier TV episode "Space Seed," for instance, and it tied up a large number of earlier loose ends, such as the fate of Khan, his people, and Kirk's son and ex-wife. You can do the same with your "dead" modules, reusing selected parts of them for subsequent adventures.

Many adventure modules include a short section detailing further adventures that might develop after the main adventure is over. The PCs might be rehired or contacted by those who used their services earlier, or vengeful NPCs who suffered from the PCs' actions might come after their foes.

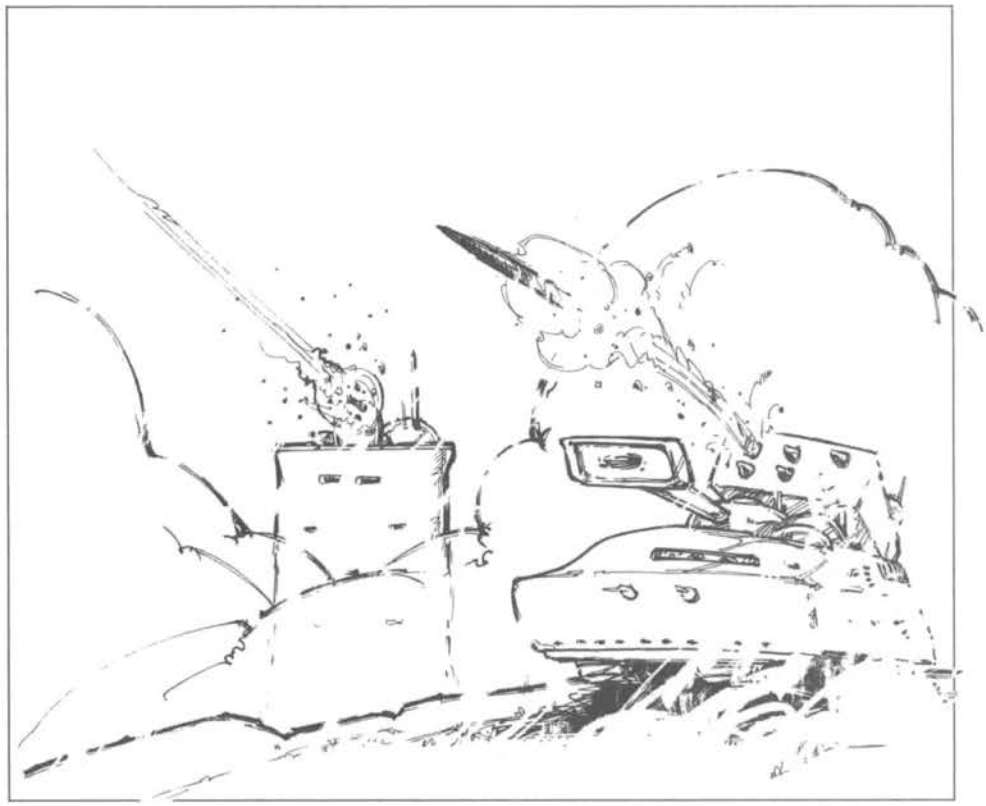
Creating spin-off adventures is actually very easy. Look over the module carefully for any and all loose ends. What unfinished business do you see? A cheated mobster, a malicious family member, possible illegal actions by the adventurers, a forgotten minor criminal, allies who need new favors—these are only the start. Be devilishly creative. What nasty things could haunt the PCs at a later date? You'll be shocked at the many opportunities you'll have to surprise your group.

Example: Jim Bambra's STAR FRONTIERS module SFAD6 *Dark Side of the Moon* is if anything even more devious than *Bugs in the System*, starting with a shocking political murder and ending in a bloody race against time to prevent genocide and world catastrophe. A few follow-up adventures are listed in the module, but many more are possible, such as these:

The escape of Jack Legrange, a villain who mixes the worst elements of Adolf Hitler and James Bond's arch-foe Blofeld, could lead to terrible consequences for the PCs if he is able to get into contact with his racist KLC cronies. Hunting Legrange would be more the job of Star Law Rangers, but determined PCs of any sort would be of help. Legrange might be hunting the PCs, too. In fact, terrorist assassins and saboteurs might search for the PCs across known space, devoting their lives to revenge for their defeat on the world of Kraatar. KLC activists could go into hiding in the cities of Kraatar, continuing their underground war against the Vrusk. Some KLC agents might escape to other worlds to build up anti-Vrusk forces, encountering the PCs at a later date by accident or design.

RIK, the Vrusk security trade house, might hire the PCs for any number of future missions, depending on the help the PCs offer during the main adventure. Other trade houses might similarly hire or ask for the services of the PCs. Involvement with the trade houses opens up the possibility of corporate espionage, the passing on of special favors and secret information, and unique contacts to new quests. An ally like Ral'ik'ka Zzik'ti, the Vrusk RIK official, would be hard to beat if the PCs got into trouble one day.

The KLC's Artemis Base, on the moon of Setarz, likely will be taken over by space forces at the adventure's end. Perhaps it will be put on sale and purchased by a corporation, or else made into a government research or military base. The PCs surely could be given an adventure that would take them back to their old battleground. They might be hired to transport building materials to the moon for a massive reconstruction project, or a Vrusk trade house might throw a party in their honor if it came in possession of the base (poetic justice indeed, given the base's former use as a KLC headquarters). Other worlds in the Triskar system might also be involved in Vrusk trade-house projects if bases and colonies are established there. Certainly the High Peaks Sanatorium would come under new management and might reappear in a future adventure for the PCs! No reason, of course, that the PCs can't buy the old sanatorium at an auction, then discover something Legrange left behind, something the police and military missed but shouldn't have.



The world of Kraatar was hardly explored in the adventure; numerous cities and points of interest remain. (I recommend remapping the world onto a *Traveller*-style polyhedral grid, as the map with the adventure is not good.) This column in issues #71-73 offered many ideas for creating adventures based upon a single world, and Kraatar is an excellent choice for any number of unusual future events.

The PCs might become lost in the uninhabited deserts, uplands, or flatlands. Alien ruins might be uncovered at the bottom of one of the two great seas. The PCs' advice or legal testimony might be sought by law-enforcement officials dealing with KLC elements on the world. A rare gemstone might be stolen by a thief who brings it to one of Kraatar's cities.

One of the human or Vrusk PCs joining the group after the main adventure might call Kraatar home and have family members who periodically need help. Sathar agents or the xenophobic Sathar themselves might make their moves to destabilize the world's government, perhaps joining forces with the racist KLC. An atomic accident at a city's power plant might challenge the PCs to organize rescue missions or attempt dangerous repairs on the damaged plant. The brother of murdered newswoman Charletta Komitz could appear with vengeance on his mind—but with the wrong target chosen.

Besides, there's always the question of what will be done with the two most deadly elements of KLC technology: the mind-controlling implant devices and the deadly Fumiga virus. Tracking down these items and their illegal use could keep Star Law PCs occupied for a long time in a STAR FRONTIERS campaign.

Parts Is Parts

Yet another thing you can do with a dead module is to (excuse the macabre humor) dismember it and use its parts elsewhere. This Dr. Frankenstein-like approach takes the episodic adventure idea just a step further. Select NPCs, equipment, vehicles, treasures, settings, and the like, then change them or make them generic to disconnect them from the dead module. Next, take the altered or generic bits and drop them into new adventures.

This technique works well in many cases for cross-game conversions, as I found out when I was running a superhero campaign some years ago. I needed

a secret laboratory for a supervillain, so I borrowed a structure from an old *Traveller* adventure, *Research Station Gamma*, and set it the middle of Lake Michigan. Of course, I rekeyed the floor plans for the lab, adding in guards and the like. It worked great.

This column has hit on this idea numerous times in the past. The amount of stuff you can steal—er, adapt from other game supplements for your own campaign is staggering. Issue #81, for example, listed many products from which you can borrow materials for developing barbaric settings, and issue #75 gave adventure supplements that can be adapted whole or in part for other games.

Da'Harrin Spaceport, described and mapped in issue #83 in the *Star Wars* adventure "Milk Run," would be easy to stick into a number of interstellar role playing games. Many of the short location descriptions and maps from "The Living City" series would fit well into barbaric world settings. You could certainly do something with the pirate base for the AD&D SPELLJAMMER® adventure "His Majesty's Spacial Service," in issue #81, and you wouldn't break into a sweat doing it.

Examples: There were two STAR FRONTIERS adventures, now rather rare and considered collectors' items by some, based on the movies *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *2010: Odyssey Two*. These modules, bearing the same names as the movies, have useful fold-out blueprints of the interiors of the huge spacecraft *Discovery* and *Leonov*, which could be renamed and dropped into other campaigns as freighters, exploration craft, derelicts from past ages, etc. I'd change the exteriors just a bit to mask their origins in the movies (everyone must know what the *Discovery* looks like), and I'd remap the floor plans onto new paper. The characters detailed in the adventures could also be renamed and used at some future time; note that they represent the cream of their fields, with skill scores ranging up to level 6—useful, no? Also given are new skills for the STAR FRONTIERS system, such as Astronomy and Politics.

Another good module to dismember is Garry Spiegle's SF3 *Sundown on Starmist*. The maps of the Sathar training base and wartank, the intelligent but primitive Heliopes and their peculiar cities and history, the alien creatures of Starmist, and the peculiar but deadly bio-genetic constructs of the Sathar would all transfer well into other campaigns unrelated to this adventure or game system.

For example, the Heliopes could go into a *Star Trek* game, the training base into a *Star Wars* game as a small Rebel base, the bio-genetic constructs into a GAMMA WORLD campaign, the wartank into a *MegaTraveller* setting, and the alien creatures into almost any science fiction game ecology. They'd go well into other STAR FRONTIERS adventures and settings, too. You could duplicate the plot and transfer it to another game by filling in the blank spots of NPCs, aliens, and so on.

No Place Like Home

Finally, one use for a dead module you might consider is to make the setting the center of your campaign. Of course, this won't work for some modules, as the settings are so limited (*Bugs in the System* is a good example of this). However, worlds suitable for colonization and worlds that have been colonized are excellent as home bases from which the PCs can hail. POLYHEDRON Newszine issues #71-73 cover this aspect of campaign development.

The trick is to make the world so interesting and full of adventure that the PCs never get bored there. Because of this, I'd recommend using only inhabited, settled worlds (homeworlds or colonies) for this technique. You really want a place the PCs can call home.

Example: This option was a difficult one to call. The STAR FRONTIERS game has several detailed worlds in its adventures that might be suitable for long campaigns, among them Volturnus (the subject of three modules), Kraatar, and Alcazzar. However, for the purposes of this article, I'll select Doug Niles's booklet adventure for the STAR FRONTIERS Knight Hawks boxed set: *The Warriors of White Light*.

This adventure sets up PCs as members of the Royal Marines of the planet Clarion, which is given just a one-page description in the booklet. The "capitalist monarchy" of Clarion is rich with adventuring possibilities, and the position of the PCs in a space marines outfit means they can have planetside and deep-space adventures.

A GM who wants to enhance Clarion as an adventuring environment can make use of the advice in this column in issues #52 (building world societies), #53 (city-building), 54-55 (satellites), #57 (villains), #58 (sensory and social details), #59 (world-building), #64 (nonlethal adventures), #65 (starport-building), #66-67 (new treasures), #68 (science books for campaign use), #70 (city-building again), #71-73 (one-world settings for adventures—particularly helpful here!), #74 (unusual adventure ideas), #75 (adventure resources from other games), #76 (horror adventures), #77 (library research for scenario design), #79 (more real science and library research), #82-83 (creative GM tricks), #85 (nation-building), and #86 (alien ecologies).

The presence of the forces of Streel, renegade robots, an antimonarchy political party, pirates, a poor world climate, and the Sathar in the system are guaranteed to make life interesting for the PCs. It's likely the huge petroleum and plastics industries on Clarion have a lot of swing in the government; corruption could easily be a major problem there. I'll also bet that Star Law agents find Clarion quite interesting as a crossroads of commerce, a place where illegal goods and activities can be found in abundance. Maybe Marine characters can eventually find employment in military intelligence or commando units, expanding their adventure options.

Clarion is supposed to have only primitive plant life, but it also has extensive petroleum deposits. Perhaps it had lots of plant and animal life once, but some worldwide disaster (of which the colonists are not fully aware yet) killed it all off eons ago. Is a repeat performance in the works?

Finally, I'd guess that much of the current ecology is imported from other worlds, possibly making Clarion a "patchwork" world of odd lifeforms. Some of these lifeforms might not get along well, and the PCs might become mixed up in the troubles that follow.

Rest In Peace—Not!

Almost any dead module can be brought back to life with a sharp, firm whack on the chest. In these economically challenging times, a smart GM will get the maximum gaming enjoyment from the least amount of cash. A good module could carry you through several months of excitement, if not years. ❑

The Heart of Evil

A Perilous Adventure In The Land Of Faerie, Queen, And Country

By John Watson, MD*

*** As recounted to Eva May Chandler and recorded by William W. Connors**

Transcriber's Note: *For many years now, I have taken great delight in the many stories and tales which my grandmother has been kind enough to share with me. In her long life she has traveled to all corners of the world and met countless fascinating people. Thus, when she recently mentioned that she had been a good friend and confident of the late Dr. John Watson and his famous companion, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, I was hardly surprised. I must confess, however, that her vast collection of Dr. Watson's unpublished manuscripts was something I could not believe. She was kind enough to pass these accounts on to me, and words alone cannot describe the pleasure that I have had in reading them.*

The adventure, which is recorded on the following pages, is my favorite of the lot. Indeed, it rivals any of the previously published adventures of the great detective. As to why the good Doctor failed to bring it to light before his own death many decades ago, I can only assume that he believed the case to be far too fantastic to be believed. I shall leave it up to the reader to decide if Dr. Watson was correct in this belief.

William W. Connors

Part One

Being a record of the horrible and macabre killing of Professor Peter Lawson and its investigation by Dr. John Watson.

I arose much later than usual on the morning of October third. The previous night had seen me in the company of several former comrades in arms. Among them was my good friend Murray, whose prompt action had saved my life so many years ago in Afghanistan.

In the great span of time that had passed since our last meeting, each of us had accumulated a healthy store of tales to share. Four times we started to say our farewells for the evening and four times the conversation proved too rivetting to abandon. Only when a distant clock chimed two, and the keeper of the pub at which we had been relaxing announced that he was closing up for the night, did we say our good-byes and head back to our lives in the scattered corners of London. We each exchanged promises to maintain closer contacts in the future, although none of us truly expected to do so.

On the way back to my lodgings at 221-B Baker street, I found myself thinking again of Afghanistan. Although my time there as an army doctor with the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers had been short, it had been of sufficient duration for me to decide that I utterly loathed the place. While I admit that the bullet I took there may have colored my view, I cannot believe that any man whose blood is English could find so inhospitable a climate palatable.

On this night, however, the weather in London had taken on a character that was so like that of Afghanistan that I could almost have closed my eyes and believed myself back in that wretched land. The air was hot and thin, as if the city stood on the top of a great peak and oxygen was impossible to extract from it. Further, it was so dry that a man seemed constantly in need of something to moisten his mouth and throat. As I slept, my dreams carried me back to that desolate waste.

As I have said, I awoke quite late. In fact, by the time I had washed and made myself presentable, it was nearly noon. Sherlock Holmes had already gone out, perhaps out of courtesy for his sleeping roommate, and I had the place to myself. I rang for Mrs. Hudson and informed her that I was ready to take my breakfast. After a half-hearted protest about the morning dishes having already been washed and put away, she acquiesced and set about making me a light meal. I thanked her, expressing truthfully my belief that no finer woman than she was to be found in all of England.

As I waited for my meal, the sharp ringing of the doorbell echoed through the air. I heard Mrs. Hudson admit someone and then the falling of quick footsteps on the stairs outside my door. One did not have to possess the faculties of Mr. Sherlock Holmes to know that this caller was in some great haste.

My visitor was a trim looking man in his late twenties with an excited look in his blue eyes and a flush of exertion in his cheeks. His features marked him as a man of determination, honesty, and intelligence—I had no need to note that he was wearing the uniform of a policeman to deduce that he had some connection with Scotland Yard.

"Mister Holmes?" he asked, clearly anxious at the thought of meeting so famous a personality. It was not the first time that someone has made the assumption that the first person to open our door is Sherlock Holmes. I suppose that I have only myself to blame, however, for I have devoted many hours to the chronicling of his remarkable gifts and should be flattered to find that my humble work has been so well received by the general populace.

"No," I said simply, "Mister Holmes is not in at the moment. I see that you are here on a matter of some urgency, but I fear that I cannot say when he will return. Perhaps I can be of some assistance?"

Upon my assertion that I was not the detective himself, the young man's face fell slightly. The exhilaration in his countenance was replaced with a look of minor irritation. Still, he seemed to be a man of perseverance who would not allow a setback like this to deter him.

"You must be Doctor Watson then," he said. I acknowledged this fact and he seemed to brighten a bit. He introduced himself as Edmund Dougherty and remarked that he had read and enjoyed all of the accounts I had written of Holmes' adventures. I thanked him as modestly as possible, but felt a minor twinge of pride at his obviously sincere praise.

No sooner had he received my thanks for his kind words than Dougherty returned to the business at hand. He presented me a sealed note that was clearly intended for my associate and invited me to open it. "It's from Mr. Lestrade, sir, and he said that I was to see it delivered into the hands of Mr. Holmes himself or, failing that, into your custody."

I turned the sealed envelope over in my hands. It was of a common enough manufacture, marked only with the name of "Sherlock Holmes" in the close, thin lettering that I knew to be Lestrade's. Breaking the seal, I pulled out a single sheet of folded paper and read with interest the brief message from Lestrade:

Mr. Holmes,

A most unsettling and barbarous crime has occurred during the night. I am, I believe, on the scent of a homicidal maniac of great brutality. Any help you can give in the apprehending of this fiend would be most appreciated.

Lestrade

I considered the matter carefully. If Lestrade were right and the killer were a brutal madman, no time could be lost in his capture. Surely, Holmes's talents were called for.

Clearly, there was only one course to take. I dare say that my association with Holmes to that point had not been uninstructive to me. While I certainly make no claim to being a fraction of the detective that he is, I felt confident that my own talent for observation had improved since our meeting. Indeed, I felt that I might genuinely be of some assistance to Lestrade.

Placing the note prominently on the mantle as was our custom when some matter needed to be brought to the other's attention, I announced that I would accompany Dougherty and inspect the scene of the crime myself. Holmes, I informed him, would see the message as soon as he returned and, no doubt, would make all possible haste in traveling to the address given on it.

By the time Dougherty and I neared the end of our journey, I was more than a little excited about the case. More than ever, I began to see this as a chance to prove to myself and Sherlock Holmes that the many mysteries we had explored together were not wasted upon me. As horrible as it seems to me now, I actually felt more than a little eager anticipation as Dougherty told me what little he knew of the matter.

The victim was a gentleman named Peter Lawson. He was employed by the Royal Museum as the assistant director of their archeology department. He lived alone on a large family estate known as Abbeywood. He employed a number of people to keep up the place, but none of them resided on the grounds. Apparently, Lawson's work was such that he would often travel abroad and, thus, he had no need of a permanent staff. At the time Dougherty had been dispatched to retain Holmes's services, no contact had been made with the man's coworkers at the museum. The body had been found by Lawson's cleaning woman, who arrived early in the morning to pursue her periodic duties.

When I asked Dougherty to tell me what he knew of the murder itself, he reacted in a most unusual fashion. "Dr. Watson," he said in a voice strangely subdued, "you are a medical man and, perhaps, are more accustomed to such things. I certainly hope so, for the sight of Mr. Lawson's body was more than I could stand. I'm not a squeamish fellow, mind you, but I'll not go into any detail about that, sir, for it is something you had best see for yourself."

Even as Dougherty finished his ominous statement, the horses slowed and we turned off of the road and onto the narrow approach that lead onto the grounds of Abbeywood. The place was sprawling, and if it had been in better condition, would certainly have been a jewel of the countryside. The groundskeeper seemed lax in his work, however, for the lawn, shrubberies, and trees of the estate had a tired look about them.

As our carriage pulled up before the house, the front door opened and out stepped Lestrade. I could tell from the look on his sallow face that he was somewhat surprised to see that I was not in the company of Sherlock Holmes. As we shook hands, I pre-empted his obvious question by saying that Holmes had not been in when his messenger arrived, but that he probably would be along shortly.

"While we wait for Holmes," said Lestrade, "perhaps you would like to examine the body. I'd best warn you, though, it is not a pretty sight."

As we moved through the entrance and down a short hallway, I was impressed by the collection of antiquities that decorated Abbeywood. All manner of archeological treasures adorned every room. Some I recognized as coming from the Orient, others were Mediterranean, and there were even some that I took to be of Red Indian origin. All told, their value must have been quite considerable. Taken as individual pieces, they gave the place an air of history and dignity. As a whole, however, they made the house feel old and macabre. At the end of the hall, Lestrade unlocked a door and pushed it open. He motioned for me to enter. As I did so, I braced myself for the shock of whatever awaited me. I should have known that anything dark enough to shock an experienced police detective like Lestrade would be more than I was ready for.

The sitting room where the body had been found was in ruins. Like the rest of the house, it had been decorated in antiques. Now, however, priceless artifacts were strewn about the room. Those of less sturdy construction were broken or shattered so that the floor was fairly covered with their debris.

Several shelves, all lined with books of every description, stood near the door where bright afternoon sunlight fell across them from a broken window on the opposite wall. Many volumes had been pulled out and thrown, seemingly at random, around the room.

A small writing desk, positioned near the window, appeared to have been shattered by some savage blow. Papers had been scattered on the floor around the wreckage, and the remains of a bottle of black ink lay in the center of a large, black stain.

A settee, its cushions torn as if by some savage, slashing knife, stood near the center of the room, facing a large fireplace. The hearth was clean of ash and set with wood and kindling as if it were about to be set alight.

Between the settee and the fireplace sat a low table of maple or some similar wood. An overturned bottle of wine rested atop it, and a large stain on the floor showed where its contents had run. Two glasses, fashioned of fine crystal, sat patiently on an ornate silver tray that I took to be of Italian origin. Somehow, they had survived whatever violence had swept this room without even being knocked over.

None of these things, however, captured my attention when I first opened the door. No. My first impression of the room was one of a rusty brown paint that appeared to have been quite liberally splashed about the place. Only when I saw the body of Peter Lawson resting on the floor before the fireplace did I recognize the paint for what it was—blood.

My first reaction was one of disbelief. Surely, the human body did not hold enough blood to account for these massive stains. When I saw the wound in Lawson's chest, however, I was forced to put aside my incredulity. The poor man was covered with wounds such as might be made by a small, ripping knife or razor. His chest was torn open so that

bone and muscle and vital organs were clear for all to see.

At first, I likened the condition of the body to a man undergoing some horrible operation, but then a more accurate picture came to me. The body of poor Mr. Lawson looked for all the world as if it had just been subjected to an autopsy by a clumsy examiner.

For all my pride, I found myself unable to bear the horrible scene. I turned away from it and, with some considerable help from Lestrade, made my way outside before becoming ill.

I spent the next several minutes recovering my wits. The air, still as hot and tenuous as it had been on the night before, was now something of a relief. I drew in deep breaths and waited for the scene of that horrible butchery to fade from my mind.

Eventually, my thinking became more clear and I recognized more than ever the importance of finding this killer. The thought that he might strike again, that another person might suffer so horrible a fate, was unbearable.

I steeled myself for a return to the ghastly scene. Ignoring the destruction around me, I moved straight to the body and began to examine it. I soon found that my medical nature took over and I was able to work with great speed. Indeed, I dare say that I rose to the occasion.

By my watch I spent almost an hour examining the corpse. My conclusions were many, but all boiled down to a few key facts. Lawson had been mauled by some animal, probably a large dog. He had survived this attack, however, but was badly wounded by the beast.

The killer had then apparently called off his dog and attacked with a long, straight knife. The knife was not used to slash or stab, however, but was wielded with great precision. In the manner of a surgeon removing a tumor from a patient, the killer made a series of incisions in Lawson's chest. The fiend was clearly a man of great strength who held his victim at bay while he went about his butchery.

Once the struggling Lawson finally succumbed, the killer cut out the heart.

What became of the heart after it was removed from the body I cannot say. It certainly was not visible in the room, and I doubted that so brutal a killer would take the time to hide it carefully. I asked Lestrade if blood stains had been found anywhere else in the house, and he assured me that they had not. If the organ had been removed from this place, I would have expected that so gory a burden would leave some mark of its passage, no matter how careful the killer was. I made a mental note to consider the importance of this unusual fact later.

I related all that I had learned to Lestrade, who took it down in his notebook. Just as I was about to call an end to my examination, I caught a glint of something in the blood-filled cavity that had once held Lawson's heart. Bending close to the body, I noted that one of the exposed ribs showed traces of metal. I pointed this out to Lestrade, who agreed with me that it was bronze. Quite possibly, I deduced, the filings were scraped from the knife blade when the weapon was used to crack the ribs.

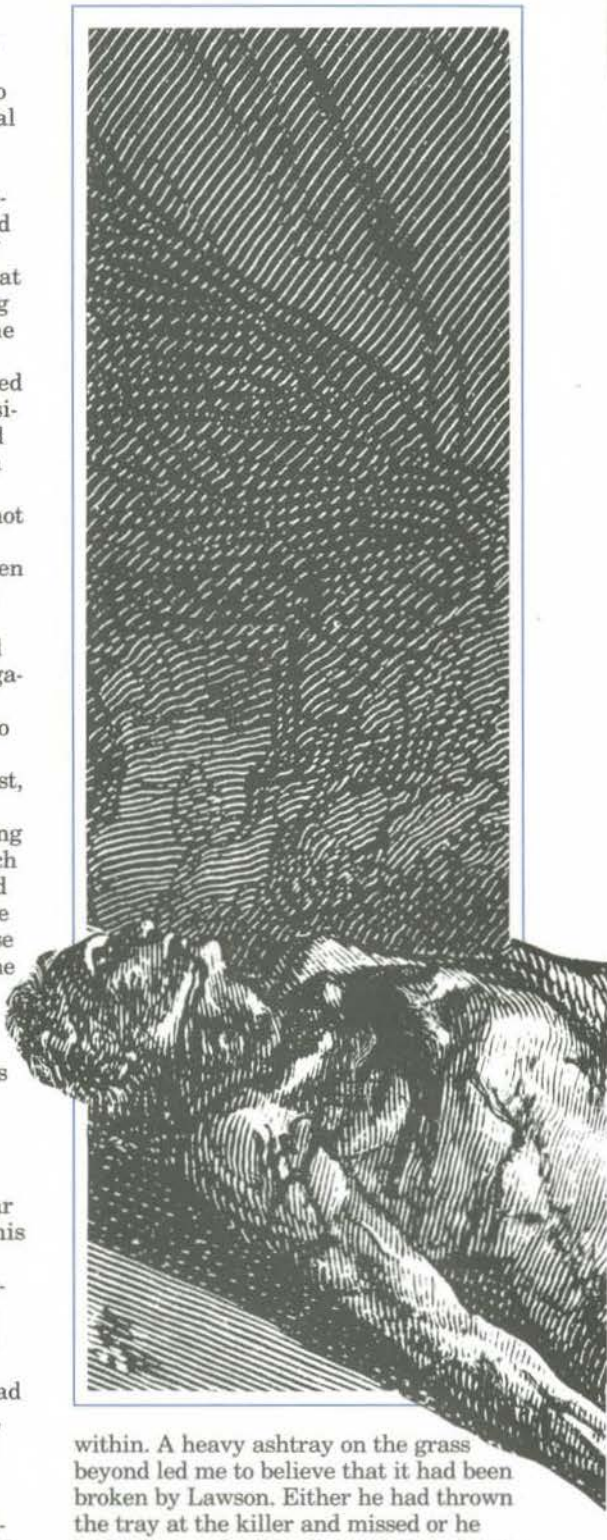
Because bronze-bladed weapons are not commonly found in London, it seemed logical to assume that the knife had been one of Lawson's own antiques, grabbed up by the killer to do his dirty work. I asked Lestrade if any such weapon had been found, but he answered in the negative.

I finished and said that I should like to have a look around the premises. Lestrade seemed surprised by my request, but agreed to it without hesitation.

I began my investigation by considering the body itself. While I had learned much from my medical analysis, I now decided to look at it in a new light. Putting aside the fact that Lawson was dead, what else might I learn from an examination of the man and his surroundings?

The first thing that sprang to mind was the color of his skin. I could not help but notice that his face and hands were darker than the rest of his body. Mirroring a similar deduction by Holmes on our first meeting, I determined that he had only recently returned from the tropics or some similar climate. A small charm worn around his neck proved to be of North African origin and of recent manufacture. Taking these two facts into consideration, and bearing in mind the point that he was known to be an archeologist, I stated to Lestrade my belief that he had just returned from Egypt. In response, the detective informed me that, while he was aware that the man had just returned from an extended junket, he did not yet know the nature of it. Feeling emboldened by my initial success, I assured him that he would find this to be the case.

Examining the shattered window, I determined from the lay of the glass shards that it had been smashed out from



within. A heavy ashtray on the grass beyond led me to believe that it had been broken by Lawson. Either he had thrown the tray at the killer and missed or he had attempted to break out the window in hopes of making an escape. I gave more credence to the former theory.

I found little else of interest in the house and we moved outside. I examined the walk that led from the carriage

road to the house in hopes of finding the murderer's footprints. I found tracks that belonged to Lawson, for his shoes had recently been repaired and the new tacks were clearly visible in the prints.

I also found the footprints of a woman. These tracks indicated that her shoes were common enough, so I could make nothing of that, but the spacing between the steps and the slightness of the impression led me to believe that the woman was short, no more than five feet in height, and of a petite build. Upon checking with Lestrade, I discovered that the housekeeper who had found the body was of similarly short stature, but of a considerable girth. Clearly, they were not her marks. Just to make sure, however, I looked carefully for evidence of the servant's passage. I quickly found several impressions that unquestionably belonged to the servant.

Much to my dismay, I found no evidence of the dog or the killer. It was possible, I supposed, that they had approached the house from another direction, crossing the lawn and entering through a window or door other than the one facing the carriage drive. Upon checking with Lestrade, however, I found that all of the other entrances to the place had been locked up tight when the police arrived.

I mentioned to Lestrade the matter of the petite woman. I could not identify her, I explained, but she was clearly someone known to the deceased and with whom he was on good terms. The latter conclusion I justified by pointing out the open bottle of wine and the two glasses in the sitting room. Lestrade agreed that there could be no other interpretation of these facts and bade me continue with my deductions.

"It appears," said I, "that the murdered man was about to do some writing; perhaps he was going to catch up on correspondence with a friend who he had been out of touch with while overseas or chronicle his return to England in some journal. In any event, he was about to begin his work when the woman arrived to interrupt him. Recognizing her, he invited her in and opened a bottle of wine for them. The wine was not, as you may have noticed, of exceptional vintage, so I doubt that the two were sweethearts. More likely she was a friend or neighbor. Whatever her business, she must have transacted it quickly, however, for the two glasses in the study were not used. Very shortly after her departure, the killer struck. It may be that he entered while the woman was still in the house, hid himself away until she departed, and then sprang upon the unwary man. It is my belief that the woman might furnish us with some background material on the case, but is of little importance in its resolution."

No sooner had I finished my explanation than Lestrade challenged me on the matter. "What leads you to believe that he was about to do some writing?" he demanded.

"That is simple." I replied. "The papers that were scattered about the parlor could not have come from within the writing desk, nor could the bottle of ink. In both cases, they must have been atop it when the blow fell that destroyed it, otherwise they would have been mixed with the debris of the desk and not scattered about the room. As the man had just returned from an extended journey, I doubt that he would have left papers and an open inkwell atop his desk for the duration of his absence. This is especially true when you consider the rest of the house—everything is sorted and put away with an almost systematic precision. Remember, Lestrade, that Lawson was employed in a museum and must certainly have been possessed of a most methodical mind."

For once, I knew the joy that Holmes must have felt when explaining his own deductions to me. It was with a combination of pride and delight that I explained to Lestrade the sources of my deductions. In the end, I could see that he had more questions, but was unwilling to pursue them.

Pulling a watch from his pocket, Lestrade looked at it sharply. He made a face that showed his displeasure at the hour. Indeed, I had not realized that it was getting so late myself. "I am afraid," he announced, "that I cannot wait any longer for Mr. Holmes. I've got to return to headquarters and file my report on the case. Dougherty will remain behind to keep an eye on things here, Doctor. If your friend arrives I'm sure he'll be able to answer all his questions. Would you care to join me for the ride back into town?"

The trip to London was silent as we watched the somehow gray and colorless sunset spread its wan light across the countryside.

Join us next issue for part two.

Dr. John H. Watson

Blood	Full human
Nationality	English
Social Class	Bourgeoisie
Profession	Doctor
Contacts	43
Permanent	Scotland Yard
Circumstance	
Monthly Wage	£120
Savings	£250
Physique	4
Fitness	39
Reflexes	37
Intellect	3
Learning	52
Intuition	56
Spirit	2
Psyche	49
Willpower	51
Influence	1
Charm	58
Position	49
Stamina	18
Body	8

Skills
Clinical Medicine (Lea)
English (Lea)
First Aid (Int)
General Medicine (Lea)
Latin (Lea)
Pathology (Lea)
Pharmacology (Lea)
Pistol (Ref)
Surgery (Lea)
Writing (Int)

Remarks: John H. Watson graduated from the University of London in 1878 with a degree as a Doctor of Medicine. Shortly afterward he became a surgeon in the Royal Army and saw combat in Afghanistan with the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers.

After being badly wounded he left the service, returned to London, and met the consulting detective, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. In the years since that fateful meeting Watson has spent countless hours chronicling the pair's adventures in search of London's criminal element.

Into The Dark

Hong Kong Chaos

by James Lowder

The Hong Kong film industry is thriving. Action directors like John Woo are creating fast-paced thrillers like *A Better Tomorrow* that boast more gunfire than a NRA convention. Mega-star Jackie Chan keeps pumping out thrilling, stunt-filled sequels to such successful films as *Project A, Police Story* and *Armour of God.* And producer-director Tsui Hark is leaving his mark on Asian cinema with such notable epics as *Once Upon a Time in China.*

These films are so successful that the American movie industry is finally taking notice. The next Van Damme action flick, *Hard Target,* will be directed by John Woo. Not so coincidentally, Woo's incredible 1986 ammunition epic, *The Killer,* has finally reached American video stores. Outstanding films like *A Chinese Ghost Story* shouldn't be far behind.

Here are a few things to watch for in Hong Kong fantasy films:

Scarf Magic: Ghosts and wizards often use cloth bands as a central part of their magic—fighting with them, using them to rescue allies knocked out of trees, and so on.

Paper Magic: Just as often as ghosts use scarf magic, priests and wizards use things inscribed with sutras or incantations for their magic. Most often this magic is paper-centered, though anything can be made into a supernatural weapon with the proper inscription.

Yin and Yang: The two interacting forces of the universe—roughly analogous to female and male, dark and light, earth and heaven. Traditionally, these forces are said to exist in a balance; disturbing the balance in either direction spells big trouble.

Flying: Many wizards and supernatural types—both good and bad—can fly, or at least leap tall pagodas with a single bound. This seems to indicate that they have better than average balance of yin and yang energy (like the *hsien*—or immortals—from Chinese mythology). Or maybe it's just a cool effect.

Goofy Humor: Very few of these films take themselves seriously, and most have lots of slapstick and rather low-brow humor scattered throughout the story. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

In the reviews that follow, I'll point out other conventions—like the dreaded Chinese hopping vampires seen in the *Mr. Vampire* series. These should provide enough of a grounding that you won't be completely at sea when the lights go down and the video rolls.

As you might suspect, these films are probably not available at the local mega-chain video store, though you might be able to hunt them down if you happen to live near a city with a large Asian population. For the rest of you, there are two ways to experience them for yourself: watch for Asian film festivals at the local college or art cinema; or purchase tapes through the mail. All of the tapes covered this month are available from Video Search of Miami (write to: PO Box 16-1917, Miami, FL 33116 for a catalog). I'll let you know about other outlets in future columns.

As always, the films reviewed here are rated as follows:

You can't get any better	*****
Entertaining and enjoyable	****
There are worse films	***
Wait for cable	**
A waste of good tape	*

A Chinese Ghost Story 2

1990, 102 Minutes
Long Shong/Golden Princess
Director: Ching Sui-Tung
Cast: Leslie Cheung, Joey Wang, Jacky Cheung
******1/2**

Way back in issue #71 I reviewed *A Chinese Ghost Story,* though at the time I'd only viewed a Chinese-language version of the film. Since then, I've managed to locate a subtitled tape. Wow. The story and dialogue are even better than I'd guessed! (Any film where the heroes storm hell is all right by me.) Based on this, I'm upgrading the film's rating to five stars.

A Chinese Ghost Story 2 continues the story of the hapless tax collector, Ning (Leslie Cheung). His heart still aching from the failed romance with Sian, the beautiful ghost from the first film, Ning finds himself enmeshed in a plot to save the aged Lord Fu from wrongful execution. Mistaken identities abound, as Fu's daughters assume Ning to be the brilliant author Elder Chu and Ning momentarily believes Windy—one of Fu's daughters—to be the reincarnation of Sian (a natural mistake, since Windy is played by Joey Wang, aka Wang Tsu Hsien, who also played Sian).

This might sound like a rather staid romantic thriller, but don't be fooled. The plot is thick with supernatural elements, as our heroes discover that the emperor's own high priest is a demon who intends to undermine the imperial court. They battle the evil one with the help of Autumn, a Taoist monk of the Kunlun sect; he can smell ghosts, travel underground like a rabbit in a Warner Brothers cartoon, and paralyze foes with a single hand gesture. (The latter power is used, or misused, to great effect in a comic sequence involving Autumn, Ning, and a huge troll-like monster).

Ning's other allies are powerful, too. Swordsman Yan (Jacky Cheung), the cool Buddhist ghostbuster from the first film, shows up in time for the concluding battle. And the troupe's stern and noble paladin, Hu, puts them all to shame when he manages to defeat six invisible foes—even after one of his arms has been cut off!

For all the amazing players, though, *A Chinese Ghost Story 2* remains vaguely unsatisfying. The overall plot is better than the first film, but Ning is largely relegated to the role of cheerleader in the final battle. While this makes for greater pyrotechnics, it also unbalances the story, which has been focused on Ning up until the epic conclusion.

Mr. Vampire

1984, 92 Minutes
Paragon
Director: Wong Kee Hung
Cast: Lam Ching Ying, Ricky Hui, Chin Sui-Ho
*****

Master Kau (Lam Ching Ying) runs a mortuary, which can be a dangerous profession in the vampire-ridden world

of imperial China. Worse still, Kau's two assistants, Man Choi (Chin Sui-Ho) and Chou (Ricky Hui), are consummate bunglers. Together, the three serve as unofficial monster hunters for their bustling town.

Take the case of Master Yam's father. When Kau, also known in the *Mr. Vampire* series as "One Eye-Brow Priest," discovers that the old guy has been buried improperly, he graciously has the body moved to his mortuary until a suitable burial site can be found. And when Old Yam (who is a vampire because of his poor treatment) escapes his coffin and terrorizes the town, Kau and his men lead the hunt for the hopping corpse.

Yup, *hopping* undead.

You see, traditional Chinese vampires don't play by the rules set down in Universal and Hammer films over the years. They wear silk funeral garb, not black cloaks. They have fangs, but their long fingernails are just as deadly. They don't like sticky rice, since it absorbs their poison. They aren't too keen on prayer bells, fire, or Lei Chee branches either. Chinese vampires are also blind, so they track their victims by the smell of their breathing.

And they hop.

Well, to be precise, the earth keeps pushing the vampire's corrupt body away, but that makes the undead hop. Take it from me, the vampires will look pretty strange to those of you weaned on Lugosi and Lee.

Anyway, One Eye-Brow Priest utilizes his considerable arsenal to battle Old Yam—flying daggers, enchanted ink, all sorts of paper magic, and old-fashion acrobatic kung fu. His assistants try to help, too, but they are far more likely to hinder the vampire-buster. Man Choi becomes a victim of Old Yam early on, and Kau must prevent him from becoming one of the hopping dead. If that weren't enough, One Eye-Brow Priest must save Chou from an amorous ghost (female ghosts drain their victim's life by seducing them).

The fight scenes are well-staged and exciting. Daggers fly, heads fly, lots of sticky rice gets tossed around, and vampires hop all over the place. As you might guess, *Mr. Vampire* is more a roller coaster ride than a tunnel of horrors, but it is an incredibly successful roller coaster. This film has spawned five sequels: *Mr. Vampire 2-Mr. Vampire 4*, as well as *New Mr. Vampire 1* (aka *Kung Fu Vampire Buster*) and *New Mr. Vampire 2* (aka *One Eye-Brow Priest*).

Savior of the Soul

1991, 92 Minutes
Team Work
Director: Cory Yuen & David Lai
Cast: Andy Lau, Aaron Kwok, Anita Mui
*****

In a strange city, where magic abounds and all rooms are cavernous and empty, this unusual tale of revenge unfolds.

Killer-for-hire Yo May-Chun (Anita Mui) is being stalked by the villainous but incredibly cool assassin, Silver Fox (Aaron Kwok). Fox strikes at anyone close to May, including the two men pursuing her affections, Chin (Andy Lau) and Koo (Kenny Bee). After Koo is killed, May spurns Chin in order to save him from Fox's blade. But time and again Chin tries to find his lost love, much to the chagrin of May's very odd twin sister (also Anita Mui) and Hwa-Shang, Koo's young sister, who also has a crush on Chin.

What follows is one of the most unusual films you're likely to ever see. The battles between Silver Fox and May are thrilling, filled with knife launchers, bulletproof cloaks, aerial sword fights, and incredible stunts. Chin gets into the act with his very unusual flexi-bladed sword—part of which doubles as a battle yo-yo. There are "breathless bullets" that literally suck the air out of a room when fired, a reclusive sorceress/warrior known as Pet Lady, and an incredible poison called Terrible Angel that is delivered by inhaling a purple mist, then running *through* the intended victim.

What makes *Savior of the Soul* truly unique is its overt manipulation of audience expectations. An amazing fight scene is followed by a tear-filled confrontation full of comic book-style angst (complete with voice over and oblique camera angles), which in turn is followed by a facetious musical montage. The character of May's sister pushes the whole film over the edge, though; she is the live-action equivalent of Wile E. Coyote. She gets shot, pounded by slamming doors, and blasted by grenades, but she keeps coming back.

Don't try to think about *Savior of the Soul* too hard while you're watching it (that'll only make your head hurt). Just sit back and prepare to be amazed.

Wolf Devil Woman

1982, 93 Minutes
Ocean Shores
Director: Chang Ling
Cast: Chang Ling
***

From the intentionally bizarre to the downright weird. This fantasy flick manages to be entertaining simply because it's so unusual—though you'll likely feel like you've been whacked with a two-by-four when you're done watching.

As you might be able to guess from the title, the hero of this epic is a young woman who was raised by wolves after her parents were killed. Dogs (doubling as their more feral relatives) teach Wolf Woman to lope around on two legs and hunt rabbits. Her costume is—I'm not kidding here—topped off with headgear made out of a stuffed German shepherd.

Wolf Woman eventually joins forces with Young Rudolph, after chewing on his hand a couple of times. Rudolph is a noble type who is searching for 1,000-year-old ginseng, which he thinks will make him immune to the villain's magical powers. Oh, who's the villain, you ask? The Devil, of course. Well, sort of the Devil. Hmmm. Never mind.

After an hour of so, Wolf Woman and Young Rudolph confront the Devil and his army of ghosts and vampires. There is much decapitation and leaping about, along with some really cheesy animation. The highlight of this battle being the point when Rudolph is set ablaze and Wolf Woman puts out the fire by biting her arm and showering animated blood on the fire.

Chang Ling, the star of *Wolf Devil Woman*, also wrote and directed the film. She put together a sequel, called—wait for it—*Wolf Devil Woman 2* (aka *Venus: Wolf Ninja*). The scary thing is, I'm kind of looking forward to seeing it.

Get Ready For Winter

The Network's Convention Will Be Hot!

The stars will be out at this year's WINTER FANTASY™ Convention. Noted Game Designers Bruce Nesmith and Bill Slavicsek, and best-selling author James Lowder, are guests-of-honor, at the RPGA® Network's very own convention.

WINTER FANTASY will be held January 7th, 8th, and 9th, at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Milwaukee, WI.

Events featured include a Living City tournament, a pair of two-round feature-level AD&D® game events, a Benefit tournament with proceeds going to the Milwaukee County Zoo, and Masters and Grand Masters tournaments.

There's a pre-registration form in the center of this issue that can be used by players and game masters.

About Our Guests

James Lowder

Best-selling author, game designer, and columnist—Jim's talents and credits are many. His most recent novel is *Prince of Lies* for the FORGOTTEN REALMS® book line. His other novels include: *Crusade, Knight of the Black Rose,* and *Ring of Winter.* He edited the *Realms of Valor* FORGOTTEN REALMS anthology and will edit the upcoming *Realms of Infamy* anthology.

Among Jim's game credits are: *Jungles of Chult* and *Hall of Heroes.* He also had a hand in editing the SPELLJAMMER® box set.

In his spare time, which is becoming increasingly rare because of his book projects, Jim pens *Into The Dark,* a video review column for the POLYHEDRON® Newszine.

Jim is currently working on *The Screaming Tower,* book one of the RAVENLOFT® Ebonacht Trilogy. The book, scheduled for release in late 1994, is set in a new domain and introduces the cursed hero, Marius the Undying.

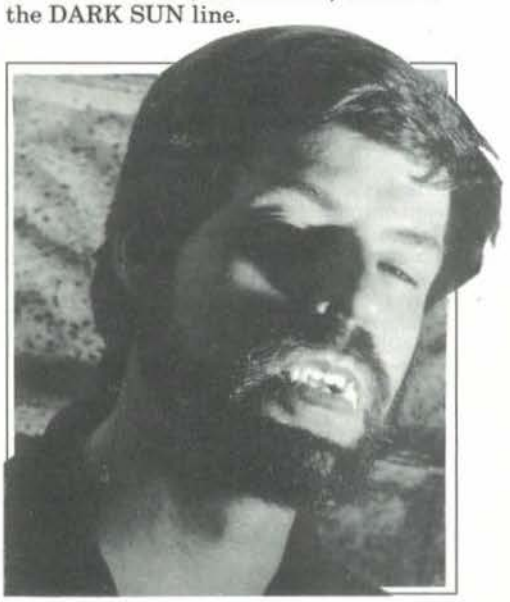
Jim has various other writing projects in the works, including a comic book series. He is also the author of Network RAVENLOFT® setting tournaments and several Living City shops that have appeared in the Newszine.

Bill Slavicsek

Designer and editor for many of TSR's DARK SUN® accessories, Bill is a veteran in the gaming field. Bill has worked on everything from military simulations to fantasy board games to role playing products. He had a hand in creating the Paranoia and Ghostbusters game lines and co-designed Torg: Role-playing the Possibility Wars.

Bill is noted for his work on the Star Wars Role Playing Game. Among his credits for West End Games were the best-selling Heir to the Empire and Dark Force Rising game supplements, based on the Timothy Zahn Star Wars trilogy. He is also the author for the upcoming *The Updated Guide to the Star Wars Galaxy* for Ballantine Books.

Bill's recent works with TSR include *The Complete Book of Humanoids* for the AD&D® game, and *Slave Tribes, Arcane Shadows,* and *Elves of Athas* for the DARK SUN line.



Bruce Nesmith

Chief designer for the RAVENLOFT line, Bruce is firmly entrenched in fantasy horror. His many RAVENLOFT game credits include: *House of Strahd, The Created, From the Shadows,* and the Forbidden Lore box set. Bruce is heralded for his design work on the DRAGON STRIKE™ game and on the AD&D accessory—BATTLESYSTEM® *Skirmishes.*

Bruce's works are numerous and line the shelves of hobby shops. Among them are: The GAMMA WORLD® 4th Edition game, *Mutant Masters, Mutating Mutants,* various Monstrous Compendiums, *Saber River, Day of the Octopus, Lone Wolves, Beta Principle, Hall of Heroes,* and the first *Book of Lairs.*

One of his most recent works is *The Warrior's Tale,* a young adult book based on the DRAGON STRIKE game. Bruce is also noted for his Network tournaments set in the Demi-Plane of Dread and for his articles in DRAGON® Magazine and the POLYHEDRON Newszine. ❑

Conventions

Rock Con, November 6-7
Rockford, IL
Enjoy many Network events including Star Wars Benefit, AD&D® game Feature, Masters, Special, and Living City. Other events include the 1993 international Empire Builder tournament, board games, and miniatures. Admission is $5 for the weekend. For information write: Rock Con Game Fair, 14225 Hansberry Rd., Rockton, IL 61072. Network GMs needed! Contact Rock Con Judge Appeal, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Pocon '93, The Rematch, November 12-14
Bartonsville, PA
Come to the Bartonsville Holiday Inn for a DBA tournament, Network AD&D tournament, Champions, Hordes of the Things, historical miniatures, fantasy/SF miniatures, role playing, board games, painting contests, dealer area, and an auction. Contact Ed Dowgiallo, The Pocono Encampment, P.O. Box 390, Effort, PA 18330; (717)629-7218.

Hexacon, November 12-14
Greensboro, NC
Hexacon is sponsored by the Science Fiction/ Fantasy Federation of UNC-Greensboro. Hexacon features role playing and strategy games, a Network Masters tournament, other Network tournaments, a dealers' room, and more. The site is the Holiday Inn Airport, 6426 Burnt Poplar Rd, Greensboro, NC. For information write: SF^3 c/o Sherrie Miller, Box 4 EUC, UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC 27912; (919)334-3159. See ya there!

PentaCon IX, November 13-14
Fort Wayne, IN
The Northeastern Indiana Gamer's Association presents PentaCon IX at the Grand Wayne Center in Downtown Fort Wayne. More than 100 role playing, miniature, and board gaming events will be offered. In addition to all the gaming, there will be a two-day flea market, more than 20 dealers, costume and miniatures contests, speed painting, computer corner, SCA demonstrations, and seminars. Official tournament will include Battletech, Star Fleet Battles, and a Network AD&D game. For more information contact: Steve Smith, 836 Himes Street, Huntington, IN 46750; (214)356-4209. Come for the games—stay for the fun.

ShaunCon VII, November 19-21
Kansas City, MO
The RPG of KC presents this convention at the Howard Johnson, 601 Washington, Kansas City. First-run Network events include Grand Masters, Masters, AD&D games, GAMMA WORLD® game, RAVENLOFT® game, Champions, Shadowrun, Star Wars, Paranoia, Torg, and Star Trek. There will be a Decathlon event, the Midwest Regional tournament finale, and a Living City event. Our special guest is Tom Dowd. Board game events include Axis & Allies, and Advanced Civilization. Miniatures events include Warhammer 40K and Space Hulk. Dealer tables, a painting contest, and seminars round out the convention. For information write: Role Players Guild of Kansas City, c/o ShaunCon VII, P.O. Box 7457, Kansas City, MO 64116; (816)455-5020.

ConTrary '93, November 19-21
West Springfield, MA
This convention will be held at the Ramada Hotel at 1080 Riverdale St. (Rt. 5 South) in West Springfield. Call (413)781-8750 for reservations. Features include more than 10 Network events—multiple Living City events—an AD&D Team, Grand Masters, RAVENLOFT setting tournaments, Call of Cthulhu Grand Masters, MARVEL SUPER HEROES, Shadowrun, Torg, and several other role playing systems. There will be several historical miniatures events, some of which will be large and run for several slots. There will be classic board and family games and a charity miniatures painting contest. A well-stocked dealers, room, seminars, and demonstrations will be available. Preregistration is available until November 3rd and is $17. For information or to pre-register or volunteer as a game master write: ConTrary '93. c/o Dragon's Lair, 2525 Riverdale Street, West Springfield, MA 01089 (enclose a SASE for confirmation of your pre-registration), or call (413)731-7237.

WINTER FANTASY, January 7-9
Milwaukee, WI
Don't miss the RPGA® Network's own annual gaming bash, which will be held in Milwaukee's downtown Hyatt Regency hotel. Join our very special guests Bill (don't spell my name wrong) Slavicsek, Jim (hand me that video) Lowder, and Bruce (look at them choppers) Nesmith for our Saturday seminar series. Walk through the dealer's room. Try your hand at feats of derring do over occupied France in our weekend-long DAWN PATROL® game challenge. Vie for the coveted moose in our Tom Wham game-a-thon. Of course, we'll have sanctioned tournaments for the AD&D game, Star Wars, and Shadowrun at Feature, Masters, Grand Masters, and Benefit levels. Living City activities will include a tournament, Chemcheaux, Land Office, and equipment auction. Pre-registration before November 30 is $15 ($10 for judges who run three or more sessions). Special convention rates are available at the Hyatt (414-276-1234) and the Hotel Wisconsin (414-271-4900), be sure to mention WINTER FANTASY. For information or to pre-register write: Winter Fantasy, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Judges wanted for Network tournaments—that means **you!** Events welcome!

RuneQuest-Con, January 14-16
Columbus, MD
Just as the name implies, a convention devoted mostly to Chaosium/Avalon Hill's RuneQuest. The site is the Columbia Inn. Events will include many RuneQuest, Call of Cthulhu, Pendragon, and Empire of the Petal Throne tournaments; a 75-person Glorantha live-action game; several seminars on Glorantha, Tekumel, and Cthulhu; a rare-merchandise auction; a storytelling contest; live-action Trollball; dealers; and a lot more. Guests of Honor include Greg Stafford, Ken Ralston, Sandy Petersen, Michael O'Brien, and David Hall. We're still looking for more events. Registration is probably $30 for the weekend, plus $10 for the live-action game. Please contact: David Cheng, 313 East 85th Street Apt. 2C, New York, NY 10028; (212)472-7752.

Kapcon '94, January 22-24
Kapiti Coast, New Zealand
New Zealand's one and only Network-supported convention, held on the beautiful Kapiti Coast. Games include a three-round AD&D Open tournament, Paranoia, Battletech, MERP, Shadowrun, and lots more. Food available on site. Entry is only $30 ($45 NZ), with a 20% discount for Network members. Write: Kapcon '94, P.O. Box 2093, Raumati Beach, New Zealand.

Celtic Con, January 22
Elkhart, IN
The Regiment, MAGI, and Celtic Miniatures will host this convention featuring historical miniatures events and Network tournaments. The door fee is $5. For information. please contact: MAGI, 106 1/2 West Lexington, Elkhart, IN 46516; (219)294-8990.

Genghis Con XV, February 18-20
Denver, CO
The Denver Gamers Association presents Genghis Con XV at the Denver Marriott Southeast, I-25 and Hampden, in Denver. This is the biggest gaming convention in the Rocky Mountain region, with a large variety of events including the nationally known Puffing Billy tournament, Network events, Kingmaker, Civilization, Battletech, Vampire, Traveller, Car Wars, and various miniatures and computer events. Also featured are specialized auctions, a miniature painting contest, a live role playing event, dealer's area, and seminars and demonstrations. Guests of honor to be announced. Preregistration is $15 for the weekend. For more information contact: The Denver Gamers Association, P.O. Box 440058, Aurora, CO 80044. For accommodations contact: The Denver Marriott Southeast at (303)758-7000.

Visioncon '94, February 24-26
Springfield, MO
join us for RPGs, board games, miniatures games, and an art show, costume contest, dealer's room, video room, and more. Persons interested in Network events, especially judging, write: Visioncon, Attention Game Coordinator, P.O. Box 1415, Springfield, MO 65801-1415, or call (417)866-4099.

Egyptian Campaign '94, February 25-27
Carbondale, IL
This event will be held in the Renaissance and Roman rooms of Southern Illinois University's Student Center in Carbondale. Games include Network AD&D and MARVEL SUPER HEROES tournaments, plus many other board and war games. Also featured is a game auction, miniatures contests, and guest speakers. Preregistration is 10. For information send a SASE to: Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, 3rd Floor Student Center, Carbondale, IL 62901-4425, or call Joel T. Nadler at (618)529-4630.

Classifieds

Alabama: Thirty-eight-year-old gamer (player since 1978) looking for a few good men and women for gaming in the metro Birmingham area (any system). I also want to hear from anyone interested in forming a gaming group. Dan Covingtion, 1720 So 14th Terr., Birmingham, AL 35205-6279; (205)930-0660 (8-10 am or 6-9 pm).

Alaska/General: Help me! Help me! Help me! I would like to learn how to play RPGs, but I have no one to teach me. Please write to me with tips on how to play TSR games. If there are any clubs in my area, I would appreciate that information, too. Send correspondence to: Stark Lovelace, P.O. Box 877582, Wasilla, AK 96687.

Arizona: I'm a serious, 18-year-old AD&D® game player/DM™. I soon will be moving to the Flagstaff area to attend college. I am looking for a gaming group or lone gamers who would like to start a club. I am willing to teach the AD&D game and willing to learn any other gaming system. Please write: Thomas Stratton, 3069 Greendale, Las Vegas, NV 89121.

Colorado: I am interested in having a game convention somewhere in Colorado, preferably one focused on role playing games such as the AD&D 2nd Edition game. I would like others to contact me and work to get this together. Please, anyone with contacts who might be able to help, or anyone who just wants to help in any way, call or write me. I am only 12 years old but would like to help get this together in any way I can. Contact: Jonathan Smith, P.O. Box 548, Nederland, CO 80466; (303)258-3715.

Connecticut: I'm looking for gamers in the Enfield, CT and Springfield, MA areas. I play the AD&D 2nd Edition game. I DM the FORGOTTEN REALMS® world, but will play in any world except the DARK SUN® setting. Contact: Dennis J. DeBalso, 65 Fox Hill Lane, Enfield, CT 06082; (203)253-9568.

Illinois: Am I all alone in a vast wilderness? Player/DM for the AD&D game, Champions, Torg, and Twilight 2000 searching for any and all others in the Mt. Vernon (Jefferson County) area. Always willing to learn other systems. Please help this poor, gameless, wandering soul. Write: Dave Smith, Rt. 1 Box 50, Texico, IL 62889; or call (618)755-9418 between 5 pm and 10 pm.

Illinois: Gamer in need of other gamers in the Hoffman Estates area. I'll play any role playing or strategy game. I can DM, but would like to just be a player. Call: Sean (708)358-1724.

Michigan: I am a 14-year-old male adventurer looking for fellow gamers in the St. Joseph area. I am a new player and will try any setting. I would love to join a club! Contact: Jason Thomas, 409 Ridgeway, St. Joseph, MI 49085; (616)983-4970.

New York: Attention Sullivan County residents! A Sullivan County Network club is long overdue. If there are six of us out there, let's get together. If you live in Sullivan County—especially in the Liberty, Bethel, Swan Lake, Monticello area—and are interested in forming a Network club, contact: Joseph Johnemen, 1826 Horseshoe Lake Road, Swan Lake, NY 12783. Please let me know if you play or DM, and tell me what games you are interested in.

North Carolina: I am 23 years old and looking for gamers in my area. I attended an out-of-state college and don't know any gamers here. My brother and I played actively until he joined the Air Force, but now I fear I'm a little rusty. I'd like to play the AD&D 2nd Edition game in the GREYHAWK®, DRAGONLANCE®, or FORGOTTEN REALMS® settings. Please write: Travis Edwards, 4716 Mountain Island Drive, Charlotte, NC 28214; (704)392-8461.

Oklahoma: Due to the recent influx of responses to the Gamers' Survey, Networks newsletter submissions, and our new member drive, the PGCO has changed its mailing address: PGCO, c/o Craig Petillo—Guildmaster, P.O. Box 75834, Farley Station, Oklahoma City, OK 73147-5834. This is effective immediately.

Oklahoma: Darkmoore, a Network club, needs DMs and staff members to help run the numerous gaming rooms at Sooner Con, the largest game convention in Oklahoma. This promises to be an exciting weekend, as the convention has grown to include two hotels this year. Come be part of the action! Sooner Con will be held November 19-21 in Oklahoma City. For more information contact: Nathan Carpenter (405)794-7624 or Mary Haggy (405)672-1263.

Oregon: I am a gamer looking for a group in the Eugene/Springfield area. I'm 20 years old and currently attending school at the University of Oregon. I play the AD&D 2nd edition game and have played Centurion and Interceptor. I am willing to learn new games. Interested? Contact: William Schaafsma, 34769 Row River Road, Cottage Grove, OR 97426; (503)942-5576.

Pennsylvania: Attention members in northeast Pennsylvania: Looking for gamers of all ages to join a newly formed club based in the Drums-Hazeleton area. Newsletter and other benefits included. For a membership form write: Ryan Pennington, P.O. Box 78, Sheppton, PA 18248.

South Carolina: I am a 28-year-old player/DM for the D&D® game and both versions of the AD&D game. I play the GREYHAWK, FORGOTTEN REALMS, RAVENLOFT®, and DRAGONLANCE settings (I have limited experience with the DARK SUN® and HOLLOW WORLD® settings). I am looking for *mature* players or DMs of any age to get together once a week or so. If you want to learn to play, you're welcome if you are mature. Sam Henline, 100 Ormond Dr., Spartanburg, SC 29306; (803)582-0423 (D), (803)582-7226 (E)

Virginia: Hello. I'm Brooks Menefee. I'm 13 years old, male, and I live in Chesterfield county. I play the FORGOTTEN REALMS and DARK SUN settings and I'm willing to try new worlds. I also have a fair amount of gaming materials. I'd like to start a new gaming club or join an existing one. Please give me a call at (804)275-0713 or write: Brooks Menefee, 4315 Deertrail DR., Richmond, VA 23234.

West Virginia: I'm Carl Evans. I play in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, and I'm new at it. I've also got a copy of the DRAGONLANCE setting, but I haven't had a chance to learn it. I'm looking for other players in Moundsville. I would also like to get some letters; I'll answer all of them. I'd especially like some tips on gaming. This is my third advertisement—is there anybody in Moundsville? Carl Evans, 1410 Center St., Moundsville, WV 86041.

General: *Wanted:* LC 1 Gateway to Ravens Bluff, Robotech RPG Book VI The Return of the Masters, and the Kara-Tur boxed set. Will pay reasonable prices. Robert Keller, 5888 Dewy Rd., Madison, OH 44057; (216)298-3464 (after 6 pm).

General: *Wanted:* Manual of the Planes, Knight of the Living Dead, H1 Bloodstone Pass, H2 Mines of Bloodstone, and H3 Bloodstone Wars. Kyle Erickson, P.O. Box 26, Cavalier, ND 58220.

General: The Gamer's Connection is fast becoming the best fanzine in the country! With readers from coast to coast, Canada, Australia, and Guam, we've got to be doing something right. For a sample copy, send $1 (for printing and postage) or send a 6" × 9" SASE with 75¢ postage to: TGC Sample, P.O. Box 278331, Sacramento, CA 95827.

General: For Sale: Star Wars role playing game accessories and rule books. Marvel Mutant Update (brand new), and DRAGONLANCE saga comic books. For a price list, send a SASE. I'd like to buy D&D® game Gazetteers 1, 3, 8, and 13; send price list. Clint Himmelberger, RD2 Box 1226, Hamburg, PA 19526.

General: Attention all owners of SSI's Unlimited Adventures game. I am interested in trading tips, scenarios, art, etc. with other owners of this game. Contact: Charles Brown, 7716 N, Ashland Apt. 1, Chicago, IL 60626-1102.

General: Large AD&D game and D&D game collection for sale. Most items are in excellent condition and out of print. Many DRAGON® Magazines, DUNGEON® Adventures, and POLYHEDRON® Newszines. Dealer inquiries welcome. I want to sell it all and my prices reflect this. For a list, send a SASE to: Michael P. Hicks, 7724-7 Greensboro Dr., West Melbourne, FL 32904.

General: Used RPGs wanted. DRAGON QUEST™ 3rd edition book; Robotech; Rifts; Heroes Unlimited; Compendium of Weapons, Armor and Castles; Palladium Fantasy RPG; Beyond the Supernatural; and the Star Wars RPG 2nd edition and any sourcebooks, accessories, and modules. I'm also looking for Mayfair's Cosmic Encounter and More Cosmic

Encounters board games. I'm not worried about the Items' condition, as long as they are complete and readable. Please contact: Leung Ming Yiu, 12a Kam Fong Mansion, 14 Kam Fong St., Kowloon, Hong Kong.

General: I am looking for gaming materials for many different game systems. If you want to sell your old items, send me your price lists or send for my want list. I'll take items in any condition as long as all the pages are intact. Dan Covington, 1720 So 14th Terr., Birmingham, AL 35205-6279.

General: My computer can find what you're looking for. List all items you want and what you have to trade, with descriptions. I'll put your list into the system and match you up, even if it requires multi-person trades. Items currently listed include: AD&D™ Trading cards (1991 and 1992 gold, 1993 ruby and green, and all promotional cards); back issue of DRAGON® Magazine, DUNGEON® Adventures, and other RPG magazines; out-of-print TSR books and modules; and other RPG collectibles. I will add other categories if there is enough interest. Send list and SASE to: John Kittrell, 2915 LBJ #161, Dallas, TX 75345; (214)530-6251. If you just want to buy or sell please let me know.

General: *Wanted:* A copy of MA3 The Ultimate Powers Book for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game. Condition doesn't matter, but all the pages must be there. Also, any books for the Talislanta RPG in at least good condition and with all the pages. I might be interested in trading miniatures. *For Sale:* Replica 10th century viking sword; CK55 Krupp steel, 40" overall, weighs 3 lbs. 8 oz. $295 or best offer. Danny Baldwin, #133 3737 W. Chestnut Expy., Springfield, MO 65802; (417)864-6367.

General: *For Sale:* DRAGON magazines from issue 54 and up, old modules for TSR games, TSR mini games, SF and fantasy novels, and much more. Call or write for a list—include your want list. Brian A. Weibel, 7168 Michael Rd. Upper, Orchard Park, NY 14127; (716)677-2908.

General: We are looking for people to be nations/species in a fantasy world. You create the government, cities, backgrounds, major characters, and heroes. You'll also conduct diplomacy (or not) with other nations and help create a history for this world. Play-by-mail, no charge. For information please write: Tim Joyce, 15522 Dobson Ave., Dolton, IL 60419-2706; (708)849-7475.

General: I'd like to purchase DUNGEON Adventures 1-9, TM4 Waterdeep Trail Map, and I3-5 Desert of Desolation, all in fine to excellent condition. Send price list to: Conrad R. Geist, 125 Walnut St., Fort Morgan, CO 80701-2637.

General: Attention all gamers! A new role playing magazine called The Galleon will debut in late 1993. If you are interested in submitting material, would like subscription information, or just want a submission guidelines packet, send a SASE to: The Galleon Magazine, 4280 Stage Coach Trail, Rockford, IL 61101-6131.

General: *Wanted:* Modules N3, N5, FR3, FR4, Desert of Desolation, I7, I10, I12, GAZ 1, GAZ 3, GAZ 11, GAZ 12, Swords of the Iron Legion, Gold and Glory, and the FORGOTTEN REALMS book for the Castles boxed set. Also interested in POLYHEDRON® Newszines prior to issue #45, including the introductory issue, Judge's Guild items, and Call of Cthulhu items. I'll consider other items. Please write: Mike Griffith, 118 S. Broadway, Wind Gap, PA 18091, or call (215)863-5178.

General: I am a 16-year-old DM/player looking for interesting and intelligent correspondence with other brilliant role players. Age and sex doesn't matter—only mental capacity. No, really, I just want someone to talk to about role playing and possibly to start a small play-by-mail club. Abram Ring, 3384 Hillsboro-Viola Rd., Hillsboro, TN 37342.

General: Private collector selling large collection of DRAGON Magazines starting at issue #18 and going up to #111. Most are in very good or near mint condition. For a price list, send a SASE to: Michael Cox, 123 Louis St. Apt. B, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Want lists also accepted.

General: Budding STAR FRONTIERS® game collector looking for supplements and modules in good shape and at reasonable prices. I'm especially trying to find Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space. Send price lists to: Edward Elsner, 9204 Watson Ct., Flushing, MI 48433-1219; (313)659-1269.

General: Joe Genero where are you? Readers of a South Carolina gaming 'zine are looking for a humorous artist who submitted a strip similar to Murphy's Rules and starring the character, Joe Genero. If anybody knows the artist or his go between, Mr. Phil Cherry, last known to be in Cincinnati, OH, please write: Mr. Pierre Savoie, 22-B Harris Ave., Toronto, ON M4C 1P4, Canada or Mr. Jolly Blackburn, 110-B Kaminer Way, Columbia, SC 29210. The emergency search hotline is (803)750-7786.

General: Help! I must sell my collection of RPGs to go back to college. Many items for the original AD&D game. Books, modules, and accessories for many different RPGs. Games by TSR, GDW, GW, Chaosium, Avalon Hill, ICE, FASA, R. Talsorian, and West End Games. For a price list, send a SASE to: CCT, P.O. Box 325, Ludlow, VT 05149.

General: The Green Mountain Gamers is a quarterly newsletter that needs original artwork; short stories; and movie, book, and game reviews. To submit work send a SASE to receive our submission guidelines (which include payment guidelines). If you'd like to receive GMG, please send us your name and address. Green Mountain Gamer, P.O. Box 59, Proctorsville, VT 05153-0059.

General: *For sale:* A variety of role playing supplements and modules for the AD&D, STAR FRONTIERS, and GAMMA WORLD® games. For a complete list, send a SASE to: Bill Brierton, 12420 Old Colony Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-5000.

General: I am searching for the following original AD&D game hard covers: Players Handbook, Dungeon Masters Guide, Monster Manual, Monster Manual II, and Unearthed Arcana. I will pay reasonable prices for items in decent condition. Send prices and conditions to: Rob Baker, 10756, E. Rost Lake Rd., Coleman, WI 54112 or call (414)879-2810 (weekends only).

Trading Cards: *For Sale or Trade:* All '93 and '91 series II gold borders. *Wanted:* '93 rare cards 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10-12, 14-16, 19, 21, 22, 26, 32,33,37, 48, 50 and 60. Please call (508)688-4341 or write: Sanford Freedman, 135 Brentwood Cr., North Andover, MA 01845.

Trading Cards: I am seeking 1991 Series I AD&D cards 304, 354, and 365. I have many other Series I cards I am willing to trade or sell, and I have a small number of the large "Neeva" cards. Rob Nicholls, 1304 West McCarty Apt. B1, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

Trading Cards: *Wanted:* Superman Doomsday cards 34, 56, and 83. I'm willing to pay any fair price. Contact: Tim Lauchnor, P.O. Box 453, Red Hill, PA 18076.

Trading Cards: *Wanted:* Any 1991 AD&D card show the DRAGONLANCE setting's Heroes of the Lance. If you have these cards to sell contact: Carl Etter, 711 Elm Ave., River Edge, NJ 07661.

Trading Cards: *For Sale:* Many of the 1992 Factory Set cards by TSR. $1 for 10 cards. Please send a list of card you're looking for. Nadja Herreshoff, 320 N. Dora, Ukiah, CA 95482.

Trading Cards: *Wanted:* 1991 AD&D cards 28, 79, 93, 108, 119, 159, 204, 262, 265, 279, 296, 298, 304, 321, 323, 354, and 365. 1992 331, 350-353, 361, 371-373, 631, 639, 640, 642, 663, 675, 680, 684, 692, 710, and 716. I have many extra cards from the '91, '92, and '93 sets. I have several '93 series I & II gold border sets for sale at $10 each. Send you want list to: Christopher Miller, 1765 B Iowa, Grand Forks AFB, ND 58204.